

CONFESSIO AMANTIS.

Tales of the Seven Deadly Sins

BEING THE

CONFESSIO AMANTIS

OF

JOHN GOWER

EDITED BY

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LONDON

LONDON

GEORGE ROUTLEDGE AND SONS

BROADWAY, LUDGATE HILL

GLASGOW, MANCHESTER, AND NEW YORK

1889

Ballantyne Press
BALLANTYNE, HANSON AND CO.
EDINBURGH AND LONDON

INTRODUCTION.

JOHN GOWER'S book of old stories is here at last made current among Englishmen of every degree. The first way of its wider diffusion was by recitation of the story-tellers. It was their business to give pleasures of imagination to the people through their ears, when even the few who could read would also listen with enjoyment to a tale recited with dramatic energy. When the play of "Pericles" brought one of Gower's tales upon our stage in Shakespeare's time, John Gower himself was supposed to speak its Prologue in his chosen measure of eight-syllabled verse. His words then recalled to mind the old way of reciting as well as reading. The actor who, dressed as Gower, came before the people, said to them :—

"To sing a song that old was sung,
From ashes ancient Gower is come ;
Assuming man's infirmities
To glad your ear and please your eyes.
It hath been sung at festivals,
On ember eves and holy ales ;
And lords and ladies in their lives
Have read it for restoratives."

To all of us Gower may now go on to repeat other lines of the same Prologue :—

"If you, born in these latter times,
When wit's more ripe, accept my rhymes ;
And that to hear an old man sing
May to your wishes pleasure bring,
I life would wish, and that I might
Waste it for you, like taper light."

For my own part, I have long wished to make it possible that

in these times his countrymen might again be pleased to hear John Gower's song.

In the few editions of these tales hitherto published, Gower's taper has burnt dimly, because they have been so presented as to blur his light. The first edition was Caxton's, printed at Westminster, and dated 1493 [by mistake for 1483]. The second edition was "Imprinted at London in Flete strete by Thomas Berthelette, Printer to the King's grace," in the year 1532. Berthelette published another edition in 1544. These were the editions of Gower's English poem read—and it was read—in the good time of Queen Elizabeth. A copy of one of Berthelette's editions was priced in a recent catalogue at £14. There was not another edition until 1810, when the "*Confessio Amantis*," printed from Berthelette's edition, was included, with other works, in the second of the twenty-one volumes of Chalmers's English Poets. Next came in 1857, and last of all, three handsome volumes of large print, the "*Confessio Amantis* of John Gower, edited and collated with the best Manuscripts by Dr. Reinhold Pauli." Dr. Pauli's edition of the text was based upon Berthelette. But there were some corrections made by reference to MSS. for supply of omissions and revision of the metre.

Here let me interpolate a word or two in hearty recognition of Dr. Reinhold Pauli's services to English Literature. He was born on the 25th of May 1823, and died on the 3rd of June 1882. He was born in Berlin, studied at Berlin and Bonn, and came to England in 1847. For several years Pauli was private secretary to Bunsen, and he did not return to Germany until 1855, after publishing here, in 1851, a study of King Alfred and his place in English History. After returning to Germany he went on with a continuation to Lappenberg's History, of which he published the first volume in 1853, the third and last in 1858. In 1857, the year in which his edition of this poem appeared, Pauli obtained a Professorship in Rostock. In 1859 he was transferred to the University of Tübingen, from which he was degraded for the independent spirit shown by him in an article on the condition of Württemberg, and sent down to teach in the Schöndal Seminary. In 1864 he had begun a History of England since Waterloo, of

which the third and last volume appeared in 1875. In 1867 he became a Professor at Marburg, and in 1870 he went to the University of Göttingen. Pauli was essentially historian, with right qualification for his work in breadth of culture and a clear sense of the debts of the present to the past, which made him the more ready to understand our duty to the future.

Old texts of the "*Confessio Amantis*" often destroy the music of the verse. There are careless transpositions of words, droppings or additions of words, substitutions of later for earlier forms, and frequent omissions of the final *e* where English of Gower's time required it. There are also in all the texts destructions of sense by errors of punctuation. Dr. Pauli's edition was an improvement upon those that went before. It is not a fault, but a merit, that he was unwilling to make any change without MS. authority. Yet this fidelity obliged him to leave many broken lines. For example, recognition of the fact that in Gower's English an adjective used definitely took a final *e* at once restores to music many scores of lines that want a syllable in Caxton's, Berthelette's, and Dr. Pauli's texts. Dr. Pauli's text has also, like Caxton's and Berthelette's, now and then a full stop in what should be the middle of a sentence.

But in all these texts, and especially in Dr. Pauli's, most of the lines are right for those whose previous training has enabled them to read Old English. There is really nothing wanted but a little help to right accentuation to enable any reader, with or without previous training in Old English, to enjoy the "*Confessio Amantis*." Of course a fallible and mortal editor cannot avoid some slips in the line for line accentuation of a poem of 30,000 lines. I believe, however, that the reader here has Gower's song more nearly than in any former edition given as he sang it himself, nothing modernised, but rather with a few words carried back to their original form for the recovery of the right rhythm of a line. Gower's poem in this edition is so far from being jagged and unmusical that, I hope, there is not a broken line in it from first to last.

Many lines of the "*Confessio Amantis*" that, in the modern way of reading them, would seem to halt, run easily when read,

with their own old accentuation. In the present volume this accentuation has been marked throughout, wherever it varied from that of the present day. Gower's verse, as we may now see, was, in fact, noticeable for its easy flow. His octosyllabics have some of the freedom that long afterwards gave grace and power to blank verse, by the interlacing of sentences and making frequent pauses and breaks of sense within the lines and not at their close only. Gower's frequent rhyming of words differing in sense but spelt alike we must regard now as a blemish. He found, indeed, difference enough for a rhyme between identical words of which one was used as a verb, one as a noun. But we may feel also that he does this because he is at ease, and not because he is hard pressed. He pours out his ready rhymes with animation by the thousand. He runs them into shrewd and homely couplets. He varies their dramatic effect by interlacing sentences with what Milton calls "the sense variously drawn out from one verse into another."

If this text, meant to be popular and yet not modernised, adds, as of course it must, some errors of its own, it has removed so many current errors that to the student as well as to the general reader it should bring Gower's Story Book much nearer home than it has been able to come hitherto. I have avoided, except in the case of manifest deviations from the first sense, all interference with the spelling of those old words which are most likely to be mangled by transcribers and printers. Names of persons were very often broken on the rack. In all the editions of the "*Confessio Amantis*," from Caxton to Pauli, the Phrygian Dares appears as *Frigidilles*; and Epicurus, obviously paired in a line with his friend Menander, is called *Epyloguorus*. In all the editions from Caxton to Pauli we read also of the plant under the star '*Cor Scorpionis*,' that "*His herbe is Astrology*," where *Astrology* is a misprint for *Aristolochy*, *Aristolochia*. I have corrected one or two such errors, but have not meddled with forms of names which are as Gower may possibly himself have written them. But who was Gower?

John Gower, Chaucer's friend and fellow poet, may have been born about the year 1327. He died in the year 1408, and was

blind during the last eight years of his life. His work as a writer for the outside world was ended by his blindness in the year 1400, the year of Chaucer's death.

John Gower was a country gentleman, of the kindred of a Sir Robert Gower who lies buried in Brabourne Church, about five miles from Ashford in Kent. A manor of Kentwell in Suffolk, which had belonged to Sir Robert Gower, found its way through a series of family arrangements into the possession of John Gower the poet. John Gower acquired also a manor of Feltwell in Norfolk; a manor of Moulton in Suffolk; and lands in Kent in the parishes of Throwley and Stalesfield. He was a feoffee of the Kentish manor of Aldington; he had a rental of ten pounds out of the manor of Wigborough in Essex; and he signed a will in the year 1373 at his own house in Kent, which was at Otford by the river Darent. From 1390 until 1397, John Gower, described not as priest but as clerk, held the rectory of Great Braxted in Essex. This was within a mile of that manor of Wigborough from which he drew ten pounds a year rental.

Gower's social position gave him access to the Court. He was known personally to the King, and he held his rectory of Great Braxted as a grant from Richard the Second. He wrote *Balades* in French, which were designed chiefly for the pleasure of the Court. But he was in his own way very much of a philosopher, and liked life best in his own home with his own thoughts and friends of his own choosing. He wrote three large poems, which agreed in having Latin titles. One of them—"Speculum Meditantis"—was in French; one—"Vox Clamantis"—was in Latin; one—this our "Confessio Amantis"—was in English: these being the three languages then used by English writers.

Of Gower's French poem—"Speculum Meditantis," the Mirror of one Meditating—no copy can now be found. Some day, perhaps, a MS. of it will be discovered abroad in some quiet old monastic library. A description of it was given in a MS. of the English poem as "divided into twelve parts, and treating of the Vices and the Virtues, and of the various degrees of this age." It is added that the poem sought "to teach, by a right path, the way whereby a transgressed sinner ought to return to the knowledge of his Creator."

It may have been especially this book which caused Chaucer to attach to his friend's name the epithet which has represented during many years for many a reader almost his whole stock of knowledge about John Gower;—that he was called "moral" by Geoffrey Chaucer. John Locke four or five times in an essay on Civil Government, written just after the English Revolution, with a half playful seriousness delivered shots from Richard^o Hooker out of a book which Locke's opponents looked upon as one of their own great fortress guns. When doing so he took pleasure in citing his author again and again as "the judicious Hooker." Since that time "the judicious Hooker" has kept company with "the moral Gower."

Chaucer's adjective was very naturally used in the dedication of his *Troilus and Cressida* to two of his own intimate friends, a poet and a philosopher, John Gower and Ralph Strode.

"O morall Gower, this booke I direct
To thee and the philosophicall Strode;
To vouchen safe there need is to correct,
Of your benignités and zeles good."

That the friendship between Chaucer and Gower was intimate is proved by the fact that, in 1378, when Chaucer was sent with Sir Edward Berkeley to Lombardy on a political mission, he left John Gower as one of two representatives who were to act for him in his absence, appearing for him in the courts if any legal proceedings should chance to be instituted.

Gower's "*Confessio Amantis*" was not written when Chaucer in the close of *Troilus and Cressida* dedicated that poem to him; and *Troilus and Cressida* seems also to have been written earlier than Gower's Latin poem, "*Vox Clamantis*," the Voice of One Crying. This poem was suggested by the Jack Straw Rebellion of May 1381, which began at Gower's own doors, including people who lived on estates of his own in Kent and Essex.

Now John Gower was a country gentleman averse to all violent change. His bias was conservative. He looked with no favour on the Lollards, as passages in the "*Confessio Amantis*" show, and he felt keenly the danger of a triumph of mob law. But he said in his "*Vox Clamantis*" that no blind Fortune governs the

affairs of men ; our world is as we make it ; whatever happens to us, "nos sumus in causa." The disorder in his time, however dangerous, must have its exciting causes in the life of the community, and he resolved to look through the whole framework of our social system. This he would do in a poem that should speak through Latin to the educated, boldly pointing out wrongs to be righted without shaping war-cries for the ignorant. All England would have echoed to that bold crying out on the condition of the clergy and the people if it had been heard in English, free as the Latin verses poured out with as much facility as if Gower were writing in his mother-tongue. In those verses Gower—a good orthodox Churchman—was outspoken in condemning all corruption, even that by which the Papacy was tainted. He was vigorous with calm invective of a righteous man who had wit and humour at command for use in homeliest plain speaking. "I do not," he said, "affect to touch the stars, or write the wonders of the poles ; but rather, with the common human voice that is lamenting in this land, I write the ills I see. God knows, my wish is to be useful ; that is the prayer that directs my labour. No hatred urges me. In the Voice of my Crying there will be nothing doubtful, for every man's knowledge will be its best interpreter." He prays that his verse may not be turgid ; that there may be in it no word of untruth ; that each word may answer to the thing it speaks of pleasantly and fitly ; that he may flatter in it no one, and seek in it no praise above the praise of God. "Give me that there shall be less vice and more virtue for my speaking." That is the true homeliness of the best English literature, and in that spirit he wrote the "*Confessio Amantis*."

Gower's English poem, the "*Confessio Amantis*," was, like Chaucer's "*Canterbury Tales*," a device for the stringing of a large number of stories upon some slender thread of narrative that should run through them all, in the way that had been made popular by the great recent success of Boccaccio's "*Decameron*." Gower probably had written much of the "*Confessio Amantis*" before Chaucer planned his "*Canterbury Tales*." Both poets worked sometimes on the same material ; while, now and then, Gower seems to have inspired Chaucer with a desire to tell again one of

his friend's good stories. It is difficult to know precisely when Gower's "*Confessio Amantis*" was first written. In its earliest form, as set forth in the Harleian MS., 3490, Gower said — without then naming as a date "the yere sixtenthe of King Richard"—that he wrote it at the request of Richard the Second. He had met the King's barge when rowing on the Thames, and Richard, having invited him on board, asked—

"That to his highé worthynesse
Some newé thing I shuldé boke,
That he himself it mighté loke
After the forme of my writing."

Gower adds that although he had long been out of health, he did his best for the king—

"To make a boke after his heste,
And write in such a manner wise
Which may be wisdom to the wise,
And play to hem that list to play."

Professor John W. Hales has reasoned that the work could only have been thus undertaken, and completed—as it is in that first form—with a loyal dedication to Richard II., at a time when Gower had yet hope in the young King. Such hope was possible only before the year 1386. In 1386 the great barons of England were active under the lead of the King's uncle, the Duke of Gloucester, whom Gower in the Latin verse of a "*Tripartite Chronicle*" has honoured as the Swan. Richard was then compelled to establish a Regency for twelve months. Professor Hales, looking for a date before 1386, finds several allusions that suggest to him the end of 1383 and the year 1384 as the time when the poem may have been first written. Afterwards in "the yere sixtenthe of King Richard," homage to the King was struck out of the beginning and end of the poem. Bolingbroke—Henry of Lancaster—was addressed in his place, and Gower, like Langland, had turned his back upon an evil King whose deposition was the best hope of the country.

The sixteenth year of King Richard, in which Gower changed the dedication of his poem, was the year 1393. In 1393-4

Henry of Lancaster presented a collar to Gower, possibly in recognition of the dedication thus transferred to him. Gower is represented on his tomb as wearing the collar of SS with a small Swan chained ; but Henry of Lancaster did not assume the Swan as his badge until after the murder of Gloucester in 1397. The collar of SS must, therefore, have been a later gift.

In 1397, the year of Gloucester's murder, for which Richard was responsible, Gower resigned his Essex rectory, and resigned the world. Being then about seventy years old, he married Agnes Groundolf in a chapel of his own, under rooms to which he retired with her for the rest of his life within the Priory of St. Mary Overies, now known as St. Saviour's, on the Southwark side of London Bridge. The old Priory was then being for the second time rebuilt, and Gower contributed so liberally to the building works that upon his death in 1408, after eleven years of residence among them—during eight of the years blind—the brethren built for him a handsome tomb, on which they carved his figure in effigy. They represented him with his head resting on the three books he had written, in French, Latin, and English. They also paid him pious honour on a painted window which another kind of piety has since destroyed. The tomb remains. The effigy upon it helps us to recall him in his habit as he lived. But in this volume his mind lives again for friendly and familiar speech among all classes of his countrymen.

In the "*Confessio Amantis*" Gower, of course, so chose his connecting matter that he might bring his tales into distinct groups, with each group armed for battle against one of the Seven Deadly Sins. He added one book more, based on a work popular in the Middle Ages, the "*Secretum Secretorum*," ascribed to Aristotle. It set forth the Duties of a King, and Gower inserted it because he was writing the poem for King Richard the Second, who was in much need of such instruction. Gower contrived also to mix with his stories much knowledge upon matters of philosophy and science. Indeed if we add all the record of what Aristotle taught Alexander to the other good doctrine of the Confessor, we have the substance of a fair education for any modern reader who does not mind being five

hundred years behind the day. The book will have for many readers an interest, apart from its tales, in its pleasant record of the kind of knowledge that a well-trained man thought worth diffusing in the latter half of the fourteenth century.

The reader to whom old English is new English will after experience of a few pages slip into Gower's music, and find his lines easier reading than some even of the good verse published in our time.

In reading aloud these differences between old and new English should be remembered :

(1) The old pronunciation of the vowels was nearer than it now is to the practice abroad, as its survival in our country dialects will help to show.

(2) Words added to our vocabulary from the Norman French were nearer to their source, and usually had their accents near the close, as they are placed in French.

(3) As a general rule a vowel at the end of a word was sounded if the next word began with a consonant, and had no separate sound if the next word began with a vowel.

(4) Verbs in 'eth,' like 'cometh,' were pronounced often, but not necessarily, without regarding the 'eth' as more of a syllable than the 'es' in comes.

(5) Where 'th' or 'v' came between two short syllables, as in whether, other, ever, there was usually an elision. In the text here given 'whether' was generally written 'where' (whe'er); in other such words the reader makes the contraction for himself. The metre tells him when to do so.

(5) The conjunction 'and' was not necessarily placed at the beginning of a clause connected by it with preceding matter. It may stand within the clause as the word 'also' does in modern English.

Some of Gower's commonest forms, like 'sigh' for saw, will become quickly familiar. Because an equivocal word like 'not' for 'ne wot'—know not—might cause a stumble now and then, I have interpreted that and other such words rather often in the footnotes, the purpose of those notes being to interrupt the text as little as possible, while enabling the eye to take in at

once the meaning of an obsolete word or form. Where the same word often recurs, the explanation is repeated often but not always: often enough, it is hoped, for the convenience of a reader who dips into the book for a tale or two, and has not yet read it through. The only modernised word is the pronoun 'thee' in a few earlier pages of the volume. It had in Gower's time, like 'me,' only one 'e.' This of course gives readers the trouble of discriminating between pronoun and article. Wherever, in the early pages of the book the word 'thee' is found, the second 'e' is of my adding; but after those earlier pages I have avoided making even that slight alteration.

A few notes on the sources of Gower's Tales will be found in the Table of Contents. Of John Gower himself and of his works a fuller account than it is here possible to give will be found in the fourth volume of my "English Writers."

H. M.

CARISBROOKE, *March* 1889.

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"But certainly no word ne writeth he
 Of thilke wicke ensample of Canace,
 That loved here owen brother sinfully;
 Of all swiche curséd stories I say fy."

As all readers must agree with Chaucer, I omit this tale. Gower against his own habitual good sense has by some aberration of mind here made his Confessor tolerant of incest. Chaucer condemns also the repulsive incident of King Antiochus in the story of Apollonius of Tyre. But that is necessary to the tale, and Gower does not there, or anywhere else than in the Tale of Canace, confuse the boundaries of right and wrong. I have dropped, however, here and there a few honest but unwholesome lines that no reader will miss.

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CONFESSIO AMANTIS.

CONFESSIO AMANTIS.

Prologue.

Of hem, that writen us to-fore,
The bokés dwelle, and we
therfore

Ben taught of that was writen tho.¹

Forthy good is, that we also

In ouré time amonge us here

Do write of newé some matere

Ensampled of the oldé wise,

So that it might in suche a wise,

Whan we be dede and ellés where,

Belevé² to the worldés ere

In timé comend after this.

But for men sain, and sothe it is,

That who that al of wisdom writ

It dulleth ofte a mannés wit

To hem that shall it allday rede,

For thilké cause if that ye rede

I woldé go the middel wey

And write a boke betwene the twey

Somwhat of lust, somewhat of lore,

That of the lasse or of the more

Som man may like of that I write.

And for that fewé men endite

In oure englishe, I thenké make³

A boké for Englundés sake

¹ *Tho*, then. ² *Belevé*, remain.

³ This was the original form of the passage,
MS. Harl. 3490:

In our englishe I thenké make
A boké for king Richardés sake,
To whom belongeth my legetance
With all min hertés obeisance
In all that ever a legé man
Unto his king may don or can,
So ferforth, and me recommaunde
To him which all me may commaunde,

The yere sixtenthe of King Richard,
What shall befallé here afterward
God wote, for nowé upon this side
Men seen the worlde on every side

Preiend unto the highé regne

Which causeth every king to regne
That his coroné longé stonde.

I thenké and have it understonde,

As it befell upon a tide,

As thing which shuldé tho betide,

Under the town of newé Troy,

Which toke of Brute his firsté joy,

In Theinsé, whan it was flowénd,

As I by boté came rowénd

So as Fortune her timé sette,

My legé lord perchaunce I mette.

And so befell as I came nigh

Out of my bote, whan he me sigh,

He bad me come into his barge.

And whan I was with him at large,

Amongés other thiugés said

He hath this charge upon me laid

And bad me do my businesse,

That to his highé worthynesse

Some newé thing I shuldé boke,

That he him self it mighté loke

After the forme of my writinge.

And thus upon his commaunding

Min herte is well the moré glad

To writé so as he me bad.

And eke my fere is well the lasse,

That none envié shall compassé

Without a resonable wite.

To feigne and blamé, that I write.

A gentil herte his tungé stilleth

That it malicé none distilleth

But préisé that is to be préised.

But he that hath his worde unpréised

And handleth out wrong any thing,

I pray unto the heven king

Fro suché tungé, he me shilde.

And nerheles this world is wilde

Of suche jangling, and what befallé.

My kingés hesté shall nought lalle,

That I in hopé to deserve

His thank ne shall his will observe

And ellés were I nought caused.

¹ *Wite*, blame.

In sondry wisé so diversed,
That it wel nigh stant all reversed.

Als for to speke of time ago,
The causé why it chaungeth so
It nedeth nought to specifie,
The thing so¹ open is at eye,
That every man it may beholde.
And nethéles by daiés olde,
Whan that the bokés weren lever,¹
Writingé was belovéd ever
Of hem that weren vertuous.
For here in erthe amongés us,
If no man writé howe it stood,
The pris of hem that weré good
Shulde, as who saith, a great partie,
Be lost ; so for to magnifie
The worthy princes that tho were
The bokés shewen here and there
Wherof the worlde ensampled is,
And tho that diden then amis
Through tyranny and cruelté,
Right as they stonden in degre
So was the writtinge of the werke.
Thus I which am a borel² clerke
Purpósé for to write a boke
After the worlde that whilom toke
Long time in oldé daiés passed.
But for men sain it is now lassed³
In worsé plight than it was tho,

For that thing may nought be refused
What that a kung him selfe hit⁴
Forthy the simplesse of my wit
I thinke if that I may avale
In his servíce to travaile,
Though I sikenesse have upon bonde,
And longe have had, yet wol I fonde,⁵
So as I made my behesté,
To make a boke after his heste
And write in such a maner wise,
Which may be wisdomé to the wise
And play to hem that list to play.
But in proverbe I have herde say,
That who that wel his werk beginneth,
The rather a good end he winneth.
And thus the prologue of my boke
After the world that whilom toke,
And eke sondele⁶ after the newe
I wol beginné for to newe.

¹ Lever, better loved.

² Borel, rough house-pun.

³ Lassed, become smaller.

⁴ Bit, prays for.

⁵ Fonde, try.

⁶ Sondele, some part.

I thinké for to touche also
The world which neweth every day,
So as I can, so as I may.
Though I sikenesse have upon bonde
And longe have had, yet wol I
fonde¹

To write and do my besinesse,
That in some part, so as I gesse,
The wisé man may ben advised.
For this Prologue is so assised,
That it to Wisdomé all belorgeth ;
That wise man that it underfongeth
He shal drawe into remémbrance
The fortune of this worldés chaunce,
The which no man in his persone
May knowé, but the Gød alone.
Whan the Prologue is so dispended,
This boke shall afterward ben ended
Of Lové, which doth many a wonder
And many a wise man hath put
under ;

And in this wise I thinke to treate
Towardés hem, that now be greате,
Betwene the vertue and the vice
Which longeth unto this office.
But for my wittés ben to smale
To tellen every mannés tale,
This boke, upon améndement,
To stonde at his commaundément,
With whom min herte is of accorde,
I sende unto min owné lorde
Which of Lancastre is Henry
named.

The highé god hath him proclaimed
Full of knighthód and allé grace.
So wolde I now this werke embrace
With hol truste and with hol beleve :
God graunte I mote it well achieve.

If I shall drawe into my minde
The timé passéd, than I finde
The worldé stode in al his welthe,
Tho² was the life of man in helthe,
Tho was plenté, tho was richesse,
Tho was the fortune of prowesse,

¹ Fonde, try.

² Tho, then.

Tho was knighthóde in pris by
name,

Wherof the wíde worldés fame
Write in croniques is yet witholde.¹

Justice of lawé tho was holde,
The privelege of regalie

Was sauf, and all the baronic
Worshipéd was in his estate.

The citees knewen no debate,
The people stode in obeisaunce

Under the rule of governaunce,
And pees, with rightwisnesse keste,

With charité tho stode in reste,
Of mannes herté the coráge

Was shewéd than in the viságe.
The word was liche to the conceipt

Withouté semblaunt of decepte :
Tho was there unenvíed love,

Tho was vertué set above,
And vicé was put under fote.

Now stant the crope under the
rote,

The worlde is chaungéd overall,
And therof moste in speciall

That Love is falle into discorde,
And that I take into recorde

Of every lond for his partie
The comun vois, which may nought

lie,
Nought upon one, but upon alle

It is that men now clepe and calle
And sain, that regnés ben devided,

In stede of love is haté guided,
The werré² wol no pees purchase,

And lawe hath take her double
face,

So that justice out of the wey
With rightwisnesse is gone away.

And thus, to loke on every halve,³
Men sene the soré without salve,

Whiche al the worlde hath overtake.
Ther is no regne of alle out take,⁴

For every climat hath his dele¹
After the turninge of the whele

Which blíndé Fortune overthrow-
eth,

Wherof the certain no man knoweth.
The heven wot what is to done.

But we that dwelle under the mone
Stonde in this worlde upon a

were,²
And namély but³ the powér

Of hem that ben the worldés guides,
With good counseil on allé sides

Ben kept upright in suche a wise,
That Haté breké nought thassise

Of Lové, which is all the chefe
To kepe a regne out of mischefe :

For allé reson woldé this,
That unto him, which the⁴ heved¹ is,

The membrés buxóm shall bowe,
And he shuldeeke here trouth allowe

With all his hert, and make hem
chere,

For good counseil is good to here :
All though a man be wise him selve,

Yet is the wisdomé more of twelc.
And if they stonden both in one,

To hope it weré than anone
That God his gracé woldé sende

To make of thilké werre an ende,
Whiche every day now groweth

newe,—
And that is gretely for to rewé,

In speciáll for Cristés sake,
Which wolde his owné life forsake

Amonge the men to yeven pees.⁵
But nowe men tellen nethéles,

That Love is fro the world departed,
So stant the pees uneven parted

With hem that liven now a daies.
But for to loke at all assaies,

To him, that woldé reson seche
After the comun worldés speche,

¹ *Witholde*, held or kept with us.

² *Werre*, war.

³ *On every halve*, on all sides.

⁴ *Out take*, excepted.

¹ *Dele*, share.

² *Upon a were*, in conflict and confusion.

³ *But*, unless.

⁴ *Heved*, head.

⁵ *To yeven pees*, to give peace.

It is to wonder of thilké werre,
In which none wote who hath the
werre.¹

For every lond him self deceiveth
And of disese his parte receiveth,
And yet ne také men no kepe.²
But thilké Lorde, whiche al may
kepe,

To whom no counseil may be hid
Upon the world, whiche is betid,
Amendé that wherof men pleine
With trewé hertés and with pleine,
And reconcilé Love agayne,
As he, whiche is king soverayne
Of all the worldés governaunce,
And of his highé purveiance
Afferné pees bitwene the londes
And take herecause into his hondes,
So that the world may stande
appesed

And his godhede also be plesed !

To thanke upon the daiés olde
The life of clerkés to beholde,
Men sain, how that they weré tho
Ensample and reule of allé tho
Which of wisdóm the vertue
soughten.

Unto the God first they besoughten
As to the substaunce of here scole,
That they ne sholden nought befole
Her witte upon none erthly werkes,
Whiche were aycin th'estate of
clerkes,

And that they mighten flee the
vice,

Which Simon hath in his office,
Wherof he taketh golde in honde.
For thilké time, I understonde,
The Lumbardemadénon eschaunge
The bisshoprichés for to chaunge,
Ne yet a letter for to sende
For dignité ne for provende

¹ That war in which none knows who has
the worse

² No kepe, no heed.

Or curéd or withouté cure,
The chirké keie in adventúre
Of armés and of brigantaille¹
Stood no thing than upon bataille,
To fight or for to maké cheste²
It thought hem thanné nought.
honéste.

But of simplesce and paciéce
They maden thanné no defence.
The courte of worldly regalie
To hem was thanné no bailie.
The vain honour was nought desired,
Which hath the proudé herté fired.
Humilité was tho witholde
And pridé was a vicé holde.³
Of holy chirké the largesse
Yaf thanne and didé great almesse
To pouer men that hadden nede.
They were eke chast in word and
dede,

Wherof the people ensample toke.
Their lust was al upon the boke,
Or for to preche or for to preie
To wissé⁴ men the righté weie
Of such as stode of trouth unlured.
Lo, thus was Peters bargé stered
Of hem that thilké timé⁵ were.
And thus came first to mannés ere
The feith of Criste, and allé good
Through hem that thanné weren
good

And sobre and chaste and large and
wise.

And now, men sain, is other wise.
Simon the cause hath undertake,
The worldés swerde on hond is take.
And that is wonder nethéles,
Whan Criste him self hath bodé⁶
pees

And set it in his Testamént,
How now that holy chirké is went
Of that here lawé positife,

¹ Brigantaille, armour.

² Cheste, strife.

³ Holde, esteemed.

⁴ Wisse, teach.

⁵ Thilke time, in that time.

⁶ Bodé, commanded.

Hath set to maké werre and strife
For worldés goods which may
nought last !¹

God wote the causé to the last
Of every right and wronge also.
But while the lawe is reuled so

That clerkés to the werre entende,
I not² how that they shall amende
The woful worlde, in other thinges

To maké pees between the kinges
After the lawe of charité,
Which is the propré dueté

Belongend unto the presthode.
But as it thinketh to manhode,
The heven is fer, the worlde is nigh,

And vainglorye is eke so sligh,³
Which covetise hath now witholde,⁴
That they none other thing be-
holde

But only, that they mighten winne.
And thus the werrés they beginne,
Wherof the holy chirche is taxed,
That in the point as it is axed
The dismé⁵ goth to the bataile,
As though Crist mighté nought
availle

To don hem right by other weic.
Into the swerd the chirché keic
Is tornéd, and the holy bede
Into cursinge, and every stede
Which sholdé stonde upon the
feith

And to this cause an eré leyth
Astonéd is of the quarele,
That⁶ sholdé be the worldes hele
Is now, men sain, the pestilénce,
Which hath exilé paciéncé
Fro the clergie in speciáll.
And that is shewed overall
In any thing whan they be greved.
But if Grevoiré be beleved

As it is in the bokés write,
He dothe us somdele for to wite¹
The cause of thilké prelatie,
Where God is nought of compaignie.
For every werke as it is founded
Shall stonde, or ellés be confounded.
Who that only for Cristés sake
Desireth curé for to take
And nought for pride of thilke
estate

To beare a name of a preláte,
He shal by reson do profite
In holy chirche, upon the plite
That he hath set his consciéncé.
But in the worldés reverence
Ther ben of suché many glade
Whan they to thilke estate ben
made,

Nought for the merite of the charge
But for they wolde hem self dis-
charge

Of pouérte and becomé grete ;
And thus for pompe and for beyete²
The scribe and eke the pharisee
Of Moïses upon the see

In the chaire on high ben set,
Wherof the feith is oft let³
Whiche is betaken⁴ hem to kepe.

In Cristés cause all day they slepe,
But of the worlde is nought foryete.
For wel is him that now may gete
Office in court to be honoured.

The strongé cofre hath al devoured
Under the keie of avarice
The tresor of the benefice,

Wherof the pouer⁵ shulden clothe
And ete and drinke and housé bothe.
The charité goth all unknowe,
For they no greine of pité sowe,
And slouthé kepeth the librarie
Which longeth to the seintuarie.

¹ For the transitory goods of this world.

² I not, I know not.

³ Sligh, cunning.

⁴ Witholde, held with, had for comrade.

⁵ Disme, tithe.

⁶ That, that which.

¹ Doth us somdele for to wite, causes us in some part to know.

² For beyete, for what they can get.

³ Let, hindered.

⁴ Betaken, entrusted.

⁵ The pouer, the poor.

To studie upon the worldés lore
 Sufficeth now withouté more.
Delicacie his sweté tothe
 Hath soffred so that it fordothe
 Of abstinence al that ther is.
 And for to loken over this,
 If Etna brenne in the clergie,
 Al openly to mannés eye
 At Avignon the experience
 Therof hath yove an evidéce
 Of that men seen hem so decided.
 And yet the cause is nought decided,
 But it is saide and ever shall :
 Bitwen two stoolés is the fall,
 Whan that men wenen best to sitte.
 In holy chirche of suche a slitte
 Is for to rewe unto us alle.
 God graunte it moté wel befallé
 Towardés him which hath thetrouth.
 But ofte is seen, that mochel slouth,
 Whan men ben drunken of the
 cuppe,
 Doth mochel harme whan fire is
 uppe,
 But if¹ somwho the flammé
 staunche ;
 And so to speke upon this braunche
 Which prouid envie hath made to
 springe
 Of scismé, causeth for to bringe
 This newé secte of Lollardie,
 And also many an heresie,
 Among the clerkés in hem selve.
 It wéré better dike and delve
 And stonde upon the righté feith
 Than knowe al that the Bible saith
 And erre as somé clerkés do.
 Upon the hond to were a shoe
 And set upon the foot a glove,
 Accordeth nought to the behove
 Of resonáble mannés use.
 If men behelden the vertuse,
 That Criste in erthé taught us here,
 Theyshulden nought in such manere

¹ But if, unless.

Among hem that ben holden wise
 The papacé so disguise
 Upon divers election,
 Whiche stant *après* thaffection
 Of sondry londés al aboute.
 But whan God wol it shal were oute,
 For trouth mot stonden atté laste.
 But yet they argumenten faste
 Upon the Pope and his estate,
 Wherof they fallen in great debatc.
 This clerk saith yea, that other nay,
 And thus they drivé forth the day ;
 And eche of hem him self amendeth
 Of worldés good : but none entendeth
 To that which comun profite were.
 They sain, that God is mighty there,
 And shal ordeiné what he wille ;
 There maké they none other skille,
 Where is the perill of the feith :
 But every clerke his herté leith
 To kepe his worlde in special ;
 And of the causé generall
 Whiche unto holy chirché longeth,
 Is none of hem that underfongeth¹
 To shapen any resistéce.
 And thus the right hath no defence,
 But there I lové, there I holde.
 Lo, thus to-broke is Cristés folde,
 Wherof the flock withouté guide
 Devouréd is on every side,
 In lacke of hem that ben unware
 Shepherdés, which here wit beware²
 Upon the worlde in other halve.
 The sharpe pricke in stede of salve
 They usen now, wherof the hele³
 They hurte of that they shulden
 hele.⁴
 And what sheep that is full of wulle
 Upon his backe they toose and pille
 While ther is any thinge to pille.
 And though there be none other
 skille,

¹ Underfongeth, undertakes.

² Beware, spend.

³ Hele, heel.

⁴ Hele, heal.

But onely for they woldé winne,
 They leué nought whan they beginne
 Upon here acté to procede,
 Whiche is no good shephérds dede.
 And upon this also men sain
 That fro the leesé whiche is pleine,
 Into the brerés they forcacche
 Here orf, for that they wolden lacche
 With such duresse and so bereve
 That shal upon the thornes leve
 Of wüllewhiche the brere hath tore,¹
 Wherof the sheep ben al to-tore,
 Of that the herdés make hem lese.²
 Lo, how they feignen chalk for chese!
 Forthough they speke and techéwel,
 They don hem self therof no dele.
 For if the wolf come in the wey,
 Their gostly staf is then away,
 Wherof they shulde her flock
 defende.

But if the pouer sheep offende
 In any thing, though it be lite,³
 They ben al redy for to smite;
 And thus, howe ever that they tale,
 The strokés falle upon the smale,
 And upon other that bene greate
 Hem lacketh heré for to beate,
 So that undér the clerkés lawe
 Men seen the merel al misdrawe.⁴
 I wol nought say in generall,
 For there ben somme in speciall,
 In whome that al virtùé dwelleth,
 And tho ben, as tha postol telleth,
 That God of his election
 Hath clepéd to perfection
 In the manér as Aaron was.
 They be nothinge in thilké cas
 Of Simon, which the foldés gate
 Hath lete and goth in othergate,

¹ That fro the leesé, &c. That from the meadow which is open plain they hunt their flock into the briars, because they would seize profit by such hard treatment and so rob them of wool that the briar has torn.

² Lese, lose.

³ Lite, little.

⁴ The merel al misdrawe, the world all drawn awry.

But they gone in the righté weie.
 There bene also somme as men
 saie,
 That folwen Simon atté heles
 Whose carté goeth upon wheles
 Of covetise and worldés pride,
 And holy chirché goth beside,
 Whiche sheweth outwarde a viságe
 Of that is nought in the coráge.
 For if men loke in holy chirche
 Betwene the worde and that they
 wirche,

There is a ful great différence.
 They prechen us in audiéncé,
 That noman shall his soule em-
 peire,¹

For al is but a chery feire.²
 This worldés good, so as they telle.
 Also they sain there is an helle,
 Whiche unto mannés sinne is due,
 And bidden us therfore escheue
 That wicked is, and do the good.
 Who that her wordés understood
 It thinketh they wolden do the
 same;

But yet betwene ernést and game
 Ful oft it torneth other wise.
 With holy talés they devise,
 How meritóry is thilké dede
 Of charité to clothe and fede
 The pouer folke, and for to parte
 The worldés good, but they departe
 Ne thenken nought³ fro that they
 have.

Also they sain, good is to save
 With penaunce and with abstinence
 Of chastité the continence.
 But plainly for to speke of that,
 I not⁴ how thilke body fat,
 Which they with deinté metés kepe,
 And lein it softé for to slepe,

¹ Empeire, damage.

² Chery feire, charivari.

³ They departe ne thenken nought, they do not think of distributing.

⁴ Not, ne wot, know not.

Whan it hath ellés of his wille,
 With chastité shall stonde stille.
 And nethéles I can nought say
 In aunter¹ if that I missay
 Touchend of this, how ever it stonde,
 I here and wol nought understonde,
 For therof have I nought to done.
 But he that madé first the mone,
 The highé God of his goodnése,
 If ther be cause, he it redresse.
 But what as any man can accuse,
 This may resón of trouthe excuse.

The vice of hem that ben ungood
 Is no reproef unto the good.
 For every man his owné werkes
 Shall beare, and thus as of the clerkes
 The goodé men ben to commende,
 And all these other God amende!
 For they ben to the worldés eye
 The mirrour of ensamplarie
 To reulen and to taken hede
 Betwene the men and the Godhede.

Now for to speke of the comúne
 It is to drede of that fortune
 Whiche hath befallé in sondry
 londes.

But often for defaute of bondes
 Al sodeinlich er it be wist
 A tonnéc, whan his lie arist,²
 To-breke, and renneth al aboute
 Whiche ellés sholdé nought gone
 oute.

And cke ful ofte a litel scar
 Upon a banke, er men be ware.
 Let in the strene which with gret
 paine,

If ever, man it shal restraine.
 Where lawé lacketh errour groweth,
 He is nought wise who that ne
 throweth,

For it hath provéd oft er this.
 And thus the comun clamour is

In every lond where people dwelleth
 And eche in his compleinté telleth,
 How that the worlde is al miswent.
 And therupon his argument
 Yeveth every man in sondry wise.
 But what man wolde him self avise.
 His consciéce and nought misuse,
 He may well at the first excuse
 His God, whiche ever stant in one,
 In Him there is defauté none.
 So must it stonde upon us selve,
 Nought only upon ten ne twelve,
 But plenerlich¹ upon us alle,
 For man is cause of that shal falle.

And nethéles yet som men write
 And sayn Fortune is to wite;²
 And som men holde opinión
 That it is constellación,
 Which causeth al that a man dothe;
 God wot of bothé whiche is sothe.
 The worlde as of his propre kinde
 Was ever untrew, and as the blinde
 Improperlich he demeth fame,
 He blameth that is nought to blame
 And preiseth that is nought to preise.
 Thus whan he shall the thingés
 preise,³

Ther is deceipté in his balaúnce
 And al is that the variaunce
 Of us, that shulde us better avise.
 For after that we fall and rise
 The worlde ariste and falleth with al,
 So that the man is over al
 His owné cause of wele and wo.
 That we Fortuné clepé so
 Out of the man him selfe it groweth.
 And who that other wisé throweth
 Beholde the people of Israël.
 For ever while they deden wel
 Fortuné was hem debonaire;
 And whan they deden the contraire
 Fortuné was contrariende.
 So that it proveth wel at ende,

¹ In aunter, peradventure.
² Whan his lie arist, when its lees rise, when
 its contents are fermenting.

¹ Plenerlich, fully. ² To wite, to blame.
³ Peise, weigh.

Why that the worlde is wonderful
And may no whilē stondē ful,
Though that it semē wel bescin ;
For every worldēs thinge is vain
And ever goth the whele aboute
And ever stant a man in doute,
Fortúnē stant no whilē stille.
So hath ther no man al his wille,
Als far as ever a man may knowe
There lasteth no thing but a throwe.¹

The world stant ever upon debate,
So may be siker none estate,
Now here now there, now to now
fro,

Now up now down, the world goth
so

And ever hath done and ever shal.
Wherof I finde in special
A talē writen in the Bible,
Which must nedēs be credfble,
And that as in conclusiōn
Saith, that upon divisiōn
Stant why no worldēs thing may
laste

Til it be drivē to the laste,
And fro the firstē regne of all
Unto this day how so befall
Of that the regnés be mevāble,
The man him self hath be coup-
able,

Whiche of his propre governaunce
Fortúneth al the worldēs chaunce.

The high almighty purveiaunce,
In whose eternē rēmembraunce
From first was every thing present,
He hath his propheciē sent
In suche a wise, as thou shalt here,
To Daniél of this matere,
How that this world shal torne and
wende

Till it be falle unto his ende ;—
Wherof the talē tell I shal
In which it is betokenēd al.

As Nabugodonosor slepte
A sweven¹ him toke, the whiche he
kepte

Til on the morwe he was arise,
For he therof was sore agrise.
Til² Daniél his dreame he tolde
And praid him fairē, that he wolde
Aredē what it token may,
And saide : a beddē where I lay
Me thought I sigh³ upon a stage,
Where stood a wonder straunge
ymage.

His hed with al the necke also
They were of fine gold, bothē two
His brest, his shulders and his armes
Were al of silver, but the armes,
The wombe and al down to the kne
Of bras they were upon to se,
His leggēs were al made of steel,
So were his feet also sondele,
And sondele part to hem was take
Of erthē, which men pottēs make.
The feble meind⁴ was with the
strong,

So might it nought wel stonde long.

And tho me thoughtē, that I sigh
A great stone from an hill on high
Fell down of sodein aventure
Upon the feet of this figure,
With which stone al to-brokē was
Gold, silver, erthē, steel and bras,
That al was into poudē brought
And so forth tornēd into nought.

This was the sweven which he had,
That Daniel anone arad
And saidē him : that figure straunge
Betokeneth how the world shal
chaunge

And waxē lassē worth and lasse,
Til it to nought all over passe.
The necke and hed, that weren
golde,

He saide how that betoken sholde

¹ But a throwe, but for a space of time.

¹ Sweven, dream.

³ Sigh, saw.

² Til, to.

⁴ Meind, mixed.

A worthy worlde, a noble, a riche
To which none after shal be liche.

Of silver that was over forthe
Shal ben a worlde of lassé worthe.

And after that the wombe of bras
Token of a wers worlde it was.
The steel which he sigh afterwarð
A world betokeneth more hard.

And yet the werste of every dele
Is last, than whan of erth and steel
He sigh the feet departed¹ so,
For that betokeneth mochel wo.

Whan that the world devided is,
It not algaté fare amis,
For erth which incined is with steel
To-gider may nought lasté wele,
But if that one that other waste,
So mot it nedés fail in haste.
The stone, whiche fro the hilly stage
He sigh down falle on that ymage
And hath it into poudre broke,
That sweven hath Daniel unloke
And said, that it is Goddes might,
Which, whan men wend most up-
right

To stondé, shal hem over caste.
And that is of this world the laste,
And than a newé shal beginne,
From whiche a man shal never
twinne

Or al to paine or al to pees,
That world shal laste endéles.

Lo, thus expoundeth Daniel
The kingés sweven faire and wel
In Babiloiné the citee,
Wher that the wisest of Caldee
Ne couthen wité² what it mente,
But he tolde al the hole entente,
As in partie it is befallé.

Of goldé the first regne of alle
Was in that kingés timé tho,
And lasté many daiés so.
There whilé that the monarchié
Of al the worlde in that partie

To Babiloiné was subgite
And helde him still in suche a plight,
Til that the world began diverse.
And that was, whan the kinge of
Perse,

Which Cyrus hight, ayein the pees
Forth with his soné Cambisés
Of Babiloine all that empire,
Right as they wolde hem self desire,
Put under in subjection
And toke it in possession,
And slain was Baltazar the king,
Which lost his regne and all his
thing.

And thus whan they it haddé
wonne,

The worlde of silver was begonne
And that of gold was passéd oute ;
And in this wise it goth aboute
Into the regne of Dariús,
And than it fell to Persé thus.
There Alisaundre put hem under,
Which wrought of armés many a
wonder,

So that the monarchié lefte
With Grece and here estate up lefte,
And Persiens gone under fote,
So suffre they that nedés mote.

And tho the world began of bras,
And that of silver ended was,
But for the timé thus it laste,
Til it befellé, that at laste
This king, whan that his day was
come,

With strength of deth was overcome.
And nethéles yet or he didé¹
He shope his regné to devide
Tò knightés, which him haddé
served,

And after that they have deserved
Yaf the conquestés that he wanne,
Wherof great werré tho beganne
Among hem that the regnes had.
Through proud envié which hemlad,

¹ *Departed*, divided.

² *Wite*, know.

¹ *Or he didé*, ere he died.

Til it befelle ayein hem thus.
The noble Cesar Julius,
Whichthowaskingeof Romé-londe,
With great bataile and with strong
honde

All Grecé, Perse and eke Caldee
Wan and put under, so that he
Nought al only of th'orient
But al the marche of th'occident
Govérneth under his empire
As he that was hole lord and sire
And heldé through his chivalrie
Of al this worlde the monarchie
And was the first of that honoúr
Which taketh name of Emperour.

Where Romé thanné wolde
assaile,

There mighté no thing contrevaile,
But every contré must obeie :
Tho goth the regne of bras aweie
And comen is the worlde of steel,
And stode above upon the whele.
As steel is hardest in his kinde
Above al other that men finde
Of metals, such was Romé tho
The mightiest and lasté so
Long time amongés the Romans,
Til they becomé so vilains,
That the fals emperour Leo
With Constantin his sone also
The patrimonie and the richesse,
Which to Silvester in pure almesse
The firsté Constantinus lefte,
Fro holy chirché they berefte.
But Adrian, which Popé was
And sawe the mischef of this cas,
Goth into Frauncé for to pleine
And praieth the great Charlemaine
For Cristés sake and soulé hele,
That he wol také the quarele
Of holy chirche in his defence,
And Charlés, for the reverence
Of God, the cause hath undertake
And with his host the waie hath
take

Over the mountes of Lumbardie.
Of Rome and al the tirannie
With bloody swerd he overcome
And the citee with strengthé nome¹
In suche a wise and there he
wroughte,
That holy chirche ayein he broughte
Into fraunchise, and doth restore
The Popés luste and yaf him more.
And thus whan he his God hath
served,
He toke, as he hath well deserved,
The diademe and was coróned
Of Rome, and thus was abandóned
Thempire, whiche camé never
ayeine

Into the hande of no Romaine.
But a long time it stode so stille
Under the Frensshé kingés wille,
Til that Fortúne her whele so lad,
That afterward Lumbárdes it had,
Nought by the swerd, but by
suffraunce
Of him that tho was king of
Fraunce,

Whiche Carlé Calvus clepéd was ;
And he resigneth in this cas
Thempire of Rome unto Lowis
His cousin, which a Lumbarde is,
And so it laste into the yere
Of Alberte and of Berenger.

But than upon dissension
They felle and in división
Among hem self that weré grete,
So that they losté the beyete²
Of worship and of worldés pees.
But in proverbé nethéles
Men sain : ful seldome is, that
welthe
Can suffre his owne estate in helthe,
And that was in the Lumbardes
sene,
Suche comun strife was hem be-
twene

¹ *Nome*, took.

² *Beyete*, possession.

Through covetise and through
 envie,
 That every man drough his partie,
 Which mighté leden any route
 Withinné bourgh and eke withoute.
 The comun right hath no felawe,
 So that the governaunce of lawe
 Was lost ; and for necessité
 Of that they stode in suche degré
 Al only through divisïon
 Hem nedeth in conclusïon
 Of straungé londés helpe beside,
 And thus for they hem self divide
 And stonden out of reule uneven,
 Of Almainé princes seven
 They chose, in this condiciön,
 That upon here electiön
 Thempire of Romé sholdé stonde.
 And thus they left it out of honde
 For lacke of grace, and it forsoke
 That Alemains upon hem toke.
 And to confermen here estate
 Of that they stoden in debate,
 They token the possessiön
 After the composiciön
 Among hem self, and ther upon
 They made an Emperour anon,
 Whos name as the croniqué telleth
 Was Othes, and so forth it dwelleth,
 Fro thilke daie yet unto this,
 Thempire of Rome hath ben and is
 To thalemainis : and in this wise
 As ye to-fore have herd devise ¹
 How Daniel the sweven ² ex-
 poundeth
 Of that ymáge, on whom he
 foundeth
 Theworld whichaftersholdé falle,—
 Comen is the last token of alle.
 Upon the feet of erthe and steel
 So stant the world now every dele
 Departed,³ which began right tho
 Whan Romé was divided so.

And that is for to rewé sore,
 For alwey sithé ¹ more and more
 The worlde empeiureth ² every day,
 Wherof the sothe shewé may.
 At Romé first if we beginne,
 The walle and al the citee withinne
 Stant in ruine and in decás,
 The feld is where the palais was,
 The town is wast, and over that
 If we beholden thilke estate
 Whiche whilome was of the Ro-
 mains,
 Of knighthod and of citeizens,
 To peise ³ now with that beforne,
 The chaf is take for the corne.
 And for to speke of Romés might
 Unnethés ⁴ stant ther ought upright
 Of worship or of worldés good,
 As it before timé stood.
 And why the worship is away
 If that a man the sothe shall say,
 The cause hath ben devisiön,
 Which moder of confusiön
 Is, where she cometh overall
 Nought only of the temporall
 But of the spiritual also.
 The dedé proveth it is so,
 And hath do many daies er this,
 Through venim which that medled ⁵
 is
 In holy chirche of erthely thing.
 For Crist him self maketh know-
 leching,
 That no man may togeder serve
 God and the World but if ⁶ he swerve
 Froward that one, and stonde un-
 stable :
 And Cristés word may nought be
 fable.
 The thing so open is at theye,
 It nedeth nought to specifie

¹ *Sithe*, since.² *Empeiureth*, grows worse.³ *Peise*, weigh.⁴ *Unnethes*, hardly.⁵ *Medled*, mixed.⁶ *But if*, unless.¹ *Devise*, relate.² *Sweven*, dream.³ *Every dele departed*, every part divided.

Or speke ought more in this matere.
 But in this wise a man may lere¹
 How that the worlde is gone aboute,
 The whiche wel nigh is weréd out
 After the forme of that figúre,
 Which Daniël in his scripture
 Expoundeth as to-fore is tolde :
 Of bras, of silver and of golde
 The worlde is passéd and agone,
 And nowe upon his oldé tone²
 It staft, of brutel³ erthe and steel
 The whiche accorden never a
 dele,⁴

So mot it nedés swerve aside
 As thing the which men seen divide.

Thapostel writ unto us alle
 And saith, that upon us is falle
 Thend of the world, so may we
 knowe

This ymage is nigh overthrowe
 By which this world was signified,
 That whilom was so magnified
 And nowe is olde and feble and
 vile,

Full of mischése and of perile,
 And stant divided eke also
 Lyke to the feet, that weré so
 As I tolde of the statue above.
 And thus men seen, through lacke
 of Love

Where as the lond divided is,
 It mot alगतé fare amis.
 And now, to loke on every side,
 A man may se the world divide :
 The werrés ben so generall
 Amonge the Cristen overall,
 That every man now secheth
 wreche,⁵

And yet these clerkés alday preche
 And sain, good dedé may none be
 Whiche stant nought upon charite.

¹ *Lere*, learn.

² *Tone*, toes.

³ *Brutel*, brittle.

⁴ *Never a dele*, never a bit.

⁵ *W'reche*, wreaking of vengeance.

I not¹ how charité sholde stonde
 Where dedly werre is taken on
 honde,

But al this wo is cause of man
 The which that wit and reson can ;
 And that in token and in wisesse,
 That ilke ymágé bare liknesse
 Of man, and of none other beste.
 For first unto the mannés heste
 Was every creätúfe ordeigned,
 But afterward it was restreigned ;
 Whan that he fel they fellen eke,
 Whan he wex seke they wexen seke ;
 For as the man hath passiön
 Of sikennesse, in comparison
 So suffren other creätúres.
 Lo, first the heavenly figures.

The sonne and mone eclipsen
 both

And ben with mannés sinne wroth ;
 The purest air, for sinne, alofte
 Hath ben and is corrupt ful ofte ;
 Right now the highé windés blowe
 And anon after they ben lowe,
 Now cloudy and now clere it is ;
 So it may proven wel by this,
 A mannés sinne is for to hate²
 Which maketh the welken to de-
 bate.

And for to se the properté
 Of every thinge in his degré,
 Benethé forth amonge us here
 Al stant a like in this matere.
 The see now ebbeth and nowe it
 floweth,
 The lond now welketh and now it
 groweth ;
 Now be the trees with levés grene,
 Now they be bare and no thing
 sene ;
 Now be there lusty somer floures,
 Now be there stormy winter
 shoures ;

¹ *Not*, know not.

² *For to hate*, to be hated.

Now be the daiés, now the nightes,
So stant there no thing al uprightes :
Nowe it is light, nowe it is derke,
And thus stant al the worldés werke
After the disposicion

Of man, and his condiciön.
Forthý¹ Gregoire in his moráll
Saith, that a man in speciáll
The lassé worlde² is properly :
And that he proveth redily.
For man of soulé resonáble
Is to an angel resembláble ;
And lyke to beste, he hath felíng :
And lyke to tres, he hath growíng.
The stonés ben, and so is he,
Thus of his propre qualite
The man, as telleth the clergie,
Is as a worlde in his partie ;
And when this litel world mis-
torneth

The greté worlde al overturneth.
The lond, the see, the firmament
They axen allé jugément
Aycin the man, and make him
warre,
Ther while him selfe stant out of
harre³

Theremenaunt wolnought accorde :
And in this wise as I recorde
The man is cause of allé wo,
Why this worlde is divided so.
Divisiön the gospel saith
One house upon an other laith,
Til that the regne al overthrowe.
And thus may every man wel knowe
Divisiön aboven alle
Is thing which maketh the world to
falle

And ever hath do, sith it began ;
It may firste prove upon a man.

The which for his complexiön
Is made upon divisiön

Of cold of hot of moist of drie,
He mot by verry kinde¹ die.
For the contraire of his estate
Stant evermore in such debate,
Til that a part be overcome
There may no final pees be nome.²
But otherwise if a man were
Made al togeder of one matere
Withouten interrupciön,
There shuldé no corrupciön
Engendre upon that unité ;
But for there is diversité
Within him selfe, he may nought
laste

That he ne daieth at the laste.
But in a man yet over this
Full great divisiön there is,
Through which that he is ever in
strife

While that him lasteth any life.

The body and the soule also
Among hem ben divided so,
That what thing that the body hateth
The soulé loveth and debateth.
But nethéles ful ofte is sene
Of werré whiche is hem betwene,
The feble hath wonné the victoire :
And whoso draweth into memoire
What hath befallé of olde and newe
He may that werré soré rewe ;
Which first began in paradís :
For there was provéd what it is
And what disesé there it wrought,
For thilké werré tho³ forth brought
The vice of allé dedly sinne
Through which divisiön came inne
Among the men in erthé here,
And was the cause and the matere,
Why God the greté floodés sende
Of all the world and⁴ made an ende

¹ *Kinde*, nature.

² *Nome*, taken.

³ *Tho*, then.

⁴ *And*. The place of "and" in a sentence might be varied, as we vary the place of " , " "

¹ *Forthý*, for that

² *The lassé worlde*, the microcosm.

³ *Out of harre*, unhinged, out of order.

But Noe with his felaship,
Which only weren sauf by ship.
And over that through sinne it
come,

That Nembroth suchrempisé nome,
Whan he the touré Babel on hight
Let make, as he that woldé fight
Ayein the highé goddés might,
Wherof devided anon right
Was the language in suche entent
Theré wisté non what other ment,
So that they mighten nought pro-
cede.

And thus it stant of every dede
Where sinné taketh the case on
honde

It may upright nought longé stonde,
For sinne of her condiciõn
Is mother of divisiõn,
And token whan the world shall
faile.

For so saith Crist withouté faile,
That nigh upon the worldés ende
Pees and accorde away shall wende
And allé charité shall cease
Among the men, and hate encrease.
And whan these tokens ben befall
All sodeinly the stone shall fall,
As Daniél it hath beknowe,
Which all this world shal over-
throwe :

And every man shall than arise
To joie or elles to juise,¹
Where that he shall for ever dwell,
Or straight to heven or straight to
hell.

In heven is pees and al accorde,
But helle is full of such discorde
That there may be no Lové day.²
Forthý³ good is, while a man
may,

¹ *Juise*, judgment.

² *Love-day*, day of peacemaking by sub-
mitting quarrels to the judgment of a Christian
minister.

³ *Forthý*, for that.

Echone to setté pces with other
And loven as his owné brother,
So may he winné worldés welthe
And afterwarde his soulé helthe.

But woldé god that now were one
An other suche as Arione,
Whiche had an harpe of such tem-
prúre,

And therto of so good mesure
He song, that he the bestés wilde
Made of his noté tame and milde,
The hinde in pees with the león,
The wolfe in pees with the motton,¹
The hare in pees stood with the
hounde,

And every man upon this grounde
Whiche Arion that timé herde,
As well the lorde as the shepherde,
Hebrought hemall in good accorde,
So that the comun with the lorde
And lord with the común also
He sette in Lové bothé two
And put away maléncolie.
That was a lustie melodie
Whan every man with other lough.²
And if ther were suche oné now
Whiche coude harpe as he tho³
ded

He might availe in many a stede
To maké pees where nowé is hate.
For whan men thenken to debate
I not⁴ what other thinge is good :
But wher that wisdom waxeth wood⁵
And reson torneth into rage,
So that mesure⁶ upon outrage
Hath set this worlde, it is to drede:
For that bringeth in the comun drede
Whiche stant at every mannés dore.
But whan the sharpnesse of the
spore

The horsé sidé smit to sore
It greveth ofte. And now no more

¹ *Motton*, sheep.

² *Tho*, then

³ *Wood*, mad.

⁴ *Lough*, laughed.

⁵ *Not*, know not.

⁶ *Mesure*, moderation.

As for to speke of this matere,
 Which none but only God may stere.
 So weré good if at this tyde
 That every man vpon his syde
 Besought and prayéd for the peace
 Whiche is the cause of all in-
 cresse

Of worshippe and of worldés welthe,
 Of hertes reste and soulés helthe,
 Without peace stondé nothing good,
 Forthy to Christ which shed his
 blood
 For peace byseketh alle men.
 Amen, Amen, Amen, Amen.

CONFESSIO AMANTIS.

Book I.

I may nought strecche up to the
heven
Min hond, ne setten¹ al in even
This world, whiche ever is in bal-
aunce ;
It stant nought in my suffisaunce
So greaté thingés to compásse.
But I mote lette it over passe
And treaten upon other thinges :
Forthý the stile of my writtinges
Fro this day forth I thenké chaunge,
And speake of thinge is nought so
strange,
Whiche every kinde hath upon
honde,
And wherupon the world mote
stonde
And hath done sithen¹ it began
And shall while there is any man,
And that is Love ; of whiche I mene
To treaté, as after shall be sene,
In whiche there can no man him
reule
For Lovés lawe is out of reule
That of to moche or of to lite²
Wellnigh is every man to wite.³
And nethéles there is no man
In all this world so wise, that can
Of Lové temper the mesuré
But as it falleth in aventure.

¹ *Sithen*, since.

² *Lite*, little.

³ *To suite*, to blame.

For wit ne strengthé may nought
helpe
And he which ellés wolde him
yelp¹
Is rathest² throwen under foote,
Ther can no wight therof do bote.³
For yet was never such covine⁴
That couth ordeine a medicíne
To thing which God in lawe of
kinde⁵
Hath set, for there may no man
finde
The righté salve for suche a sore.
It hath and shal be evermore
That Love is maister where he will,
There can no life make other skill,⁶
For where as ever him list to set
There is no might which him may
let.
But what shall fallen atté laste,
The sothé can no wisdom caste,
But as it falleth upon chaunce,
For if there ever was balaunce
Whiche of Fortúné stant governed,
I may well leve as I am lerned⁷
That Love hath that baláunce on
honde
Whiche wol no reson understonde.

¹ *Yelp*, boast.

³ *Bote*, remedy.

⁵ *Kinde*, Nature.

² *Rathest*, soonest.

⁴ *Covine*, contrivance.

⁶ *Skill*, distinction.

⁷ *Leve as I am lerned*, believe as I am taught.

For Love is blinde and may nought
se,

Forþy there may no certainté
Be sette upon his jugément.
But as the whele abouté went
He yeveth his graces undeserved,
And fro that man which hath him
servéd

Ful ofte he taketh away his fees ;
As he that plaieth at the dies ¹
And therupon what shal befall
He not, ² tū that the chauncé fall
Where ³ he shall lese or he shal
winne.

And thus full ofté men beginne
That if they wisten what it ment
They woldé chaunge all here entent.

And for to prove that it is so
I am my selfé one of tho ⁴
Whiche to this scole am underfonge. ⁵
For it is sithé go nought longe ⁶
As for to speake of this matere
I may you telle, if ye woll here,
A wonder hap which me befelle,
That was to me bothe harde and
felle,

Touchend of Love and his fortune,
The which me liketh to commúnc
And plainly for to telle it oute
To hem that lovers ben aboute ;
Fro point to pointe I wol declare
And writen of my woful care,
My woful day, my woful chaunce,
That men now také rémembraunce
Of that they shal here after rede.
For in good feith this wolde I rede, ⁷
That every man ensample take
Of wisdom which is him betake, ⁸
And that he wote of good apprise ⁹
To teche it forth, for suche emprise

¹ Dies, dice

³ Where, whether.

⁵ Underfonge, received.

⁶ Since not long ago.

⁷ Rede, counsel.

⁹ And that which he knows to be worth
learning.

² Not, knows not.

⁴ Tho, them.

Is for to preise : and therefore I
Wol write and shewe all openly,
How love and I togider mette,
Wherof the worlde ensample fette
May ¹ after this, whan I am go,
Of thilke unsely jolif wo,
Whose reulé stant out of the wey,
Now glad, and now gladnesse away,
And yet it may nought be with-
stonde
For ought that men may under-
stonde.

Upon the point that is befallé
Of love, in which that I am fallé,
I thenké tellé my matere.
Now herken, who that woll it here,
Of my fortune how that it ferde
This enderday, ² as I forth ferde
To walke, as I you tellé may.
And that was in the moneth of May,
Whan every brid hath chose his
make
And thenketh his merthés for to
make

Of lové, that he hath acheved.
But so was I no thing releved,
For I was further fro my love
Than erthe is fro the heaven above,
And for to speke of any spede ³
So wiste I me none other rede, ⁴
But as it were a man forfare ⁵
Unto the wood I gan to fare,
Nought fortosingé with the briddes,
For whan I was the wood amidde
I fonde a swoté grené pleine,
And there I gan my wo compleine
Wisshinge and wepinge all min one ⁶
For other mirthés made I none.
So hard me was that ilké throwe, ⁷
That ofte sithes ⁸ overthrowe

¹ Ensamplé fette may, may fetch example.

² This enderday, this past day, lately.

³ Spede, success.

⁵ Forfare, undone.

⁶ All min one, all by myself.

⁷ Throwe, throe.

⁸ Ofte sithes, many times.

⁴ Rede, counsel.

To grounde I was, withouté brethe :
 And ever I wisshéd after dethe,
 Whan I out of my peine awoke,
 And caste up many a pitous loke
 Unto the heven and saidé thus :
 'O thou Cupide, O thou Venús,
 'Thou god of love and thou god-
 desse,

Where is pité? where is mekenesse?
 Now doth me¹ plainly live or die,
 For certés suche a maladic
 As I now have, and longe have had,
 It mighté make a wise man mad,
 If that it shuldé longe endure.
 O Venus, quene of lovés cure,
 'Thou life, thou lust, thou mannés
 hele,

Beholde my cause and my quarele
 And yef me some part of thy grace,
 So that I may finde in this place,
 If thou be graciús or none !'
 And with that worde I sawe anone
 The Kinge of Love and Quené bothe.
 But he, that king, with eyen wrothe
 His chere aweiward fro me caste
 And forthe he passéd atté laste'
 But nethéles er he forth wente
 A firy dart me thought he hente²
 And threwe it through min herte
 rote.³

In him fonde I none other bote,⁴
 Forlenger list him nought to dwelle.
 But she, whiche, is the source and
 welle

Of wele or wo that shal betide
 To hem that loven, at that tide
 Abode, but for to tellen here
 She cast on me no goodly chere,
 Thus nethéles to me she saide :
 'What art thou, sonne?' And I
 abraide.⁵

Right as a man doth out of slepe,
 And therof toke she right good
 kepe¹

And bad me nothing be adradde,
 But for all that I was nought gladde,
 For I ne sawe no causé why.
 And eft² she asketh, what was I?

I saide : 'A caitif that lyth here.
 What woldé ye my lady dere?
 Shall I be hole or ellés die?'
 She saidé : 'Telle thy maladic.
 What is thy sore of which thou
 pleinst,

Ne hide it nought, for if thou feignest
 I can do thee no medicéne.'

'Madame, I am a man of thine
 That in thy Court have longé served
 And axé that I have deserved,
 Some wele after my longé wo.'

And she began to loured thq
 And saidé : 'There be many of you
 Faitours,³ and so may be that thou
 Art right suche one, and by faintise
 Saist, that thou hast me do service.'
 And nethéles she wisté wele
 My word stood on an other whele
 Withouten any faiterie.
 But algate of my maladie
 She bad me tell and say her trouthe.

'Madame, if ye wolde havé routhe,⁴
 Quod I, 'than wolde I tellé you.'

'Say forth,' quod she, 'and telle me
 how,

Shewe me thy siknesse every dele.'

'Madamé, that can I do wele,
 Be so my life therto wol laste.'

With that her loke on me she caste
 And saide : 'In aunter⁴ if thou live
 My wille is first, that thou be
 shrive ;

¹ Doth me, cause me to.

² Hente, seized.

³ Min herte rote, the root of my heart.

⁴ Bote, remedy. ⁵ Abraide, started.

¹ Kepe, heed

² Faitours, dissemblers.

⁴ In aunter, if it happen.

² Eft, again.

And nethéles how that it is
 I wot my selfe, but for all this
 Unto my Prest which cometh anone
 I wol thou telle it one and one,
 Both al thy thought and al thy werke.
 O Genius, min owné clerke,
 Come forth, and here this mannés
 shrifte,¹
 Quod Venus tho. And I uplifté
 Min hede with that, and gan be-
 holde
 The selfé Prest, whiche as she
 wolde
 Was redy there and fet him doune
 To heré my Confessiön.

This worthy prest, this holy man
 To me spekend thus began
 And saidé: "Benedicite
 My sone, of the felicité
 Of Love and eke of all the wo
 Thou shalt be shrive of bothé two.
 What thou er¹ this for lovés sake
 Hast felt, let nothing be forsake;
 Tel plainly as it is befallé."

And with that worde I gan down
 falle
 On knees, and with devociön
 And with full great contriciön
 I saidé thanné! "Dominus
 Min holy fader Genius,
 So as thou haste experience
 Of Lové, for whose reverence
 Thou shalt me shriven at this time,
 I pray thee let me nought mistime
 My shrifté, for I am destourbed
 In all min herte and so contourbed,
 That I ne may my wittés gete;
 So shal I inoché thing foryete.²
 But if thou wolt my shrifte oppose³
 Fro point to pointe, than I suppose
 There shall nothing be left behinde.
 But now my wittés be so blinde,

¹ *Er*, etc.² *Foryete*, forget.³ *Oppose*, test by argument.

That I ne can my selfé teche."
 Tho¹ he beganne anon to preche,
 And with his wordés debonaire
 He saidé to me softe and faire:
 "My sone, I am assignéd here
 Thy shrifté to oppose and here
 By Venus the goddésse above,
 Whose prest I am touchend of love.
 "But nethéles for certain skill²
 I mote algate³ and nedés will
 Nought only maké my spekings
 Of Lové, but of other thinges
 That touchen to the cause of Vice.
 For that belongeth to thoffice
 Of Prest, whose ordre that I bere:
 So that I wol nothing forbere
 That I the Vices one and one
 Ne shall thee shewen everichone.
 Wherof thou might take evidence
 To reulé with thy consciëce.
 But of conclusiön fináll
 Conclude I wolde in speciáll
 For Lové, whose servaüit I am
 And why the cause is that I cam.
 So thenke I to do bothé two,—
 First that⁴ min ordre longeth to
 The Vices for to telle a rewe;⁵
 But nexte, above all other, shewe
 Of Love I wol the propretés,
 How that they stondé by degres
 After the disposiciön
 Of Venus, whose condiciön
 I must folwe as I am holde,
 For I with Love am al witholde,⁶
 So that the lasse I am to wite,⁷
 Though I ne conné but a lite⁸
 Of other thingés that bene wise;
 I am nought taught in suche a wise.

¹ *Tho*, then; from an indeclinable *thú*.
 When it means 'those,' it is from *thú*, plural
 of 'that'

² *Skill*, discrimination.³ *Mote algate*, must always.⁴ That which belongs to my calling.⁵ *A rewe*, in row, in their order.⁶ *Witholde*, retained.⁷ *To wite*, to blame. ⁸ Know but a little.

For it is nought my comun use
 To speke of vices and vertúse,
 But all of Love and of his lore,
 For Venus bokés of no more
 Me techen, nouthur text ne glose.
 But for als moche as I suppose
 It sit a Prest to be wel thewed¹
 And shame it is if he be lewed,²
 Of my presthode after the forme
 I wol thy shrifté so enforme,
 That at the lasté thou shalt here
 The Vices, and to thy matere
 Of Love I shal hem so remove
 That thou shalt knowé what they
 meve.

For what a man shall axe or saine
 Touchend of shrifte, it mot be
 pleine;³

It nedeth nought to make it queinte,⁴
 For Trough his wordés wol nought
 peinte.

That I wol axe of thee forthý,
 My sone, it shal be so plainly
 That thou shalt knowe and under-
 stonde

The pointes of Shrift how that they
 stonde."

[*The Senses: Sight and Hearing.*]

Betweene the life and death I
 herde

This Prestés tale er I answérde;
 And than I praid him for to say
 His will, and I it wolde obey
 After the forme of his apprise.
 Tho spake he to me in such wise
 And bad me, that I sholdé shrive
 As touchende of my wittés five,
 And shapé that they were amended
 Of that I haddé hem mispended.

For tho¹ be properly the gates,
 Through which as to the hert
 algates²

Cometh all thing unto the feire
 Which may the mannes foule em-
 peire.³

And now this matter is brought in,
 "My sone, I thenké first beginne
 To wit⁴ how that thin eye hath
 stonde,

The whiche is as I understonde
 The mosté principál of alle
 Through whom that peril may be-
 falle.

And for to speke in Lovés kinde,
 Full many suche a man may finde
 Whiche ever caste aboute here eye
 To loke if that they might asprie
 Ful ofté thing which hem ne touch-
 eth,

But only that here herte soucheth⁵
 In hindringe of an other wight.

And thus ful many a worthy knight
 And many a lusty lady bothe
 Have be full ofté sithés wrothe;

So that an eye is as a thefe
 To Love, and doth ful great mes-
 chéfe;

And also for his owné part
 Ful ofté thilké fry dart
 Of lové, which that ever brenneth,
 Through him⁶ into the herté ren-
 neth.

And thus a mannés eyé ferst
 Him selfé greveth altherwerst,⁷
 And many a timé that he knoweth
 Unto his owné harme it groweth.
 My soné, herken now forthý
 A talé, to be ware therby

¹ *Tho*, those. ² *Algates*, always.

³ *Empeire*, impair, injure.

⁴ *To wit*, to know.

⁵ *Soucheth*, suspecteth.

⁶ *Him*, (the eye). 'It' was used only in the
 nominative and accusative. 'His' and 'him'
 are both masculine and neuter.

⁷ *Altherwerst*, worst of all.

¹ *Well thewed*, of good manners

² *Lewed*, unlearned as the common people.

³ *Pleine*, plain.

⁴ *Queinte*, ingeniously elaborated.

Thin eyé for to kepe and warde,
So that it passé nought his warde.

"Ovidé telleth in his boke
Ensample touchend of misloke
And saith, how whilom ther was one
A worthy lord, whiche Acteon
Was hote,¹ and he was cousin nigh
To him that Thebés first on high
Upsetté,² which king Cadmé hight.
This Acteón, as he wel might,
Above all other cast his chere,³
And used it from yere to yere
With houndés and with greté hornes
Among the wodés and the thornes
To make his hunting and his chace ;
Where him best thought, in every
place,

To findé gamen in his way,
There rode he for to hunte and play.
So him befelle upon a tide⁴
On his hunting as he gan ride
In a foréste alone he was ;
He sigh⁵ upon the grené gras
The fairé fresshé flourés springe ;
He herd among the levés singe
The throstel with the nightingale.
Thus, er he wist, into a dale
He came, wher was a litel pleinc
All rounde abouté wel beseine
With busshes grene and cedres
high,—

And there within he caste his eye.
Amid the plaine he saw a welle
So fairé there might no man telle,
In which Diana naked stood,
To bathe and play her in the flood,
With many a nimphé which her
serveth.

But he his eye awey ne swerveth
Fro heré, which was naked all.
And she was wonder wroth withall,

And him, as she which was god-
désse,

Forshope¹ anone, and the likenesse
She made him him taken of an herte,
Which was tofore his houndés sterte,
That ronné besilich aboute
With many an horne and many a
route,

That maden mochel noise and crie :
And atté laste unhappilie
This hert his owné houndes slough
And him for vengeaunce all to-
drough.²

"Lo now, my soné, what it is
A man to casté his eye amis,
Which Acteón hath dere abought ;
Beware forthý³ and do it nought.
For ofté, who that liedé toke,
Better is to winké than to loke.
And for to proven it is so
Ovidé the poete also
A talé, whiche to this matere
Accordeth, saith, as thou shalt here.

In Methamor⁴ it telleth thus,
How that a lord whiche Phorceus
Was hoté,⁵ haddé daughters thre.
But upon their nativité
Such was the constellaciön,
That out of mannés naciön
For kindé they be so miswent,
That to the likenesse of a serpént
They weré bothe, and so that one
Of hem was clepéd Stellibone,
That other suster Suriale,
The thrid, as telleth in the tale,
Medusa hight ; and nethéles
Of comun namé Gorgonés
In every contre there about,
As monstres whiché that men
doute,⁶

¹ *Hote*, called.

² *Upsetté*, set up.

³ *Cast his chere*, lifted his face.

⁴ *Upon a tide*, upon a time. ⁵ *Sigh*, sigh.

¹ *Forshope*, transformed.

² *All to-drough*, pulled to pieces.

³ *Forthy*, therefore.

⁴ *Methamor*, (Ovid's) *Metamorphoses*.

⁵ *Was hote*, was called.

⁶ *Doute*, fear.

Men clepen¹ hem ; and but one eye
Among hem thre in purpartie²
They had of which they mighte se,
Now hath it this, now hath it
she.

After that cause and nede it ladde
By throwés eche of hem it hadde.³

A wonder thing yet more unis
There was, wherof I telle al this :

What man on hem his cheré caste⁴
And hem behelde, he was als faste
Out of a man into a stone

Forshape,⁵ and thus ful many one
Deceivéd were, of that they wolde
Misloké where that they ne shulde.

But Perseus that worthy knight,
Whom Pallas of her greté might
Halpe, and toke him a shield therto,

And eke the god Mercúry also
Lent him a swerde, he, as it fell,
Beyond Athlans the highé hill

These monstres sought, and there
he fonde

Diversé men of thilké londe
Through sight of hem mistornéd
were

Stondend as stonés here and there.
But he,—which wisdom and prow-
ésse

Hath of the god and the goddesse,—
The shilde of Pallas gan embrace,
With which he covereth sauf⁶ his

face,
Mercuries swerde and out he
drough,

And so he bare him that he slough
These dredfull monstres allé thre.

“Lo now, my sone, avisé the,
That thou thy sight nought misuse ;
Cast nought thin eye upon Meduse

That thou be tornéd into stone.
For so wise man was never none
But if he woll his eyé kepe
And take of foul delite no kepe,¹
That he with lusté nis² ofte nome
Through strengthe of love, and over-
come.

Of mislokinge how it hath ferde,
As I have told, now hast thou herde.

“*My* godé soné, take good hede,
And over this yet I thee rede,³

That thou beware of thin hering,
Which to the herté the tiding
Of many a vanité hath brought
To tarie with⁴ a mannés thought.

And nethéles good is to here
Such thing, wherof a man may lere
That⁵ to vertue is accordaunt :

And toward all the remenaunt
Good is to torne his cré fro,
For elles but a man do so

Him may ful ofté misbefalle.
I rede ensample amongés alle,
Wherof to kepé wel an ere

It oughté put a man in fere.
“A serpent, which that aspidis
Is clepéd, of his kinde hath this,

That he the stone noblést of alle
The which that men carbuncle calle
Bereth in his heed above on heichte

For which whan that a man by
sleighte,
The stone to winne and him to

daunte
With his carecte⁶ him wolde en-
chaunte,

Anone as he perceiveth that,
He lith down his one ere al plat
Unto the ground, and halt it faste,

And eke that other ere als faste

¹ *Clepen*, name.

² *Purpartie*, share.

³ As cause and need directed, each of them
had it at times.

⁴ *His cheré caste*, turned his face.

⁵ *Forshape*, transformed

⁶ *Sauf*, safely.

¹ *No kepe*, no heed.

² *Nis*, is not.

³ In addition to this I counsel you.

⁴ *To tarie with*, wherewith to corrupt,
French ‘*tarer*.’

⁵ Learn that which.

⁶ *Carecte*, magic spell.

He stoppeth with his tail so sore,
That he the wordés lasse or more
Of his enchauntément ne hereth.
And in this wise him selfe he
skiereth,¹

So that he hath the wordés weived²
And thus his ere is nought deceived.

"An other thing who that re-
cordeth

Lyke unto this ensample accordeth,
Whiche in the tale of Troye I finde.
Sirenés of a wonder kinde
Ben monstres, as the bokés tellen,
And in the Greté See³ they dwellen,
Of body bothe and of viságe
Like unto women of yonge age
Up fro the navel on high they be,
And down benethe, as men may se,
They bere of fisshes the figure.
And over this, of such nature
They ben, that with so swete a
steven⁴

Like to the melodie of heven
In womannishé vois they singe,
With notés of so great likíngé,
Of suche mesúre, of suche musíke,
Wherof the shippes they beswike⁵
That passen by the costés there.
For whan the shipmen lay an ere
Unto the vois, in here avis⁶
They wene it be a paradis,
Whiche after is to hem an helle.
For reson may nought with hem
dwelle

Whan they the greté lustés⁷ here,
They conné nought here shippes
stere ;

So besilich upon the note
They herken and in such wise
assote,⁸

¹ Skiereth, secureth. ² Weived, set aside.
³ The *Grete See*. was the name of the Medi-
terranean.

⁴ Steven, voice.

⁵ Beswike, betray.

⁶ Here avis, their opinion.

⁷ Lustes, delight.

⁸ Assote, become besotted.

That they here righté cours and
weie

Foryete, and to their ere obeie,
And sailen till it so befallé
That they into the perill fallé
Where as the shippés ben to-drawe
And they ben with the monstres
slawe.

But fro this peril nethéles
With his wisdóm king Ulixés
Escapeth and it over passeth,
For he to-fore the hond¹ compásseth
That no man of his compaignie
Hath power unto that folie
His éré for no Just to caste.
For he hem stoppéd allé faste,
That non of hem may here hem
sing.

So whan they comen forth sailing,
There was such governaunce on
honde

That they the monstres have with-
stonde,
And slain of hem a great partic.
Thus was he sauf with his navie
This wisé king through gover-
naunce.

"Herof, my sone, in rémem-
braunce,

Thou might ensample taken here
As I have tolde, and what thou here
Be wel ware, and yef no credence
But if² thou se more evidence.
For if thou woldest také kepe³
And wisely coutheest warde and
kepe

Thine eye and ere, as I have spoke,
Than haddest thou the gatés stoke⁴
Fro such folý as cometh to winne
Thin hertés wit whiche is withinne.
Wherof, that now thy love excedeth
Mcsúre, and many a peiné bredeth :

¹ To-fore the hond, before hand.

² But if, unless.

³ Take kepe, take heed.

⁴ Stoke fro, barred against.

But if thou couthest sette in reule
 Tho two, the thre were eth¹ to reule.
 Forthy as of thy wittés five
 I wol as nowe no moré shrive,
 But only of these ilké two.
 Tel me, therfore, if it be so,—
 Hast thou thine eyé nought mis-
 throwe?"

"My fader yea, I am beknowe,
 I have hem cast upon Meduse,
 Therof I may me nought excuse.
 Min hert is growén into stone,
 So that my lady there upon
 Hath suche a printe of Lové grave,
 That I can nought my selfé save."

"What saist thou sone, as of thin
 ere?"

"My fader, I am gilty of there,
 For whanne I my lady here,
 My wit with that hath lost his stere.
 I do nought as Ulixes dede,
 But falle anon upon the stede²
 Where as I se my lady stonde.
 And there I do you understonde³
 I am to-pulléd in my thought,
 So that of reson leveth⁴ nought
 Wherof that I me may defende."

"My godé sone, God the amende.
 For as me thenketh by thy speche
 Thy wittés ben right far to seche.
 As of thin ere and of thin eye
 I wol no moré specife,
 But I woll axen over this
 Of other thing how that it is.

[Of the Seven Deadly Sins: and
 PRIDE, the First of them.]

My sone, as I thee shall enforme,
 There ben yet of another forme

¹ *Eth*, easy. "The two" are sight and hearing, which have been discussed; if you could rule those two of the Five Senses, it would be easy to rule the other three. Therefore of the rest of the five, &c.

² *Stede*, place.

³ Make you to understand.

⁴ *Leveth*, remaineth.

Of Dedly Vices, Seven applied,
 Wherof the herte is ofté plied¹
 To thing which after shal him greve.
 The first of hem thou shalt beleve
 Is Pridé, whiche is principall,
 And hath with him in speciall
 Ministrés fivé ful diverse,
 Of which as I thee shal reherse
 The first is said Ypocrisie.
 If thou art of his compaignie
 Tel forth, my sone, and shrive thee
 clene."

"I wote nought, fader, what ye
 mene,

But this I woldé you beseche,
 That ye me by somweié teche
 What is to ben an ypocrite.
 And than if I be for to wite²
 I wol beknewen³ as it is."

"My sone, an ypocrite is this,—
 A man which feigneth consciéce
 As though it were al innocéce
 Without, and is nought so withinne;
 And doth so, for he wolde winne
 Of his desire the vein estate:
 And whan he cometh anone thereat,
 He sheweth thanné what he was;
 The corne is tornéd into gras,
 That was a rose is than a thorne,
 And he that was a lamb beforne
 Is than a wolfe; and thus malice
 Under the colour of justfice
 Is had, and, as the people telleth,
 These Ordres witen⁴ where he
 dwelleth

As he that of her⁵ counseil is;
 And thilké world, which they er this
 Forsoken, he draweth in ayeine;
 He clotheth riches, as men saine,
 Under the simplest of pouérte
 And doth to seme of great deserte

¹ *Plied*, bent.

² *To wite*, to blame.

³ *Beknownen*, acknowledge and confess.

⁴ These religious orders know.

⁵ *Her*, their.

Thing whiche is litel worth withinne,
 He saith, in open, fy ! to sinne,
 And in secré there is no vice
 Of which that he nis a norice.¹
 And ever his chere is sobre and
 softe,
 And where he goth he blesseth ofte.
 Wherof the blindé world he dre-
 cheth.²

But yet all only he ne strecheth
 His reule upon religiön.
 But next to that condicion,
 In suche as clepe hem holy cherche,
 It sheweth eke howe he can werche
 Amonge tho widé furréd hodes
 To geten hem the worldés goode-
 And they have self ben thilké same
 That setten most the world in blame,
 But yet in contraire of here lore
 There is nothing they loven more ;
 So that, feignend of light, they werke
 The dedés whiche are inward derke,
 And thus this double Ypocrisie
 With his devoute apparancie,
 A viser set upon his face
 Wherof toward this worldés grace
 He seméth to be right wel thewed,
 And yet his herte is all beshrewed
 But nethéles he stant beveled
 And hath his purpos ofte acheved
 Of worship and of worldés welthe,
 And taketh it as who saith by stelhthe
 Through coverture of his fallas.³
 And right so in semblable cas
 This Vice hath eke his officers
 Among these other seculers
 Of greté men,—for of the smale
 As for to accompt he set no tale,⁴
 But they that passen the comúne
 With suche him liketh⁵ to comune ;

And where he saith he wol socoure
 The people, there he wol devoure.
 For now-a-day is many one
 Which speketh of Peter and of John
 And thenketh Judas in his herte ;
 There shall no worldés good asterte.¹
 His honde, and yet he yeveth al-
 messe

And fasteth ofte and heréth messe
 With *meu culpa*, whiche he saith ;
 Upon his brest ful ofte he leith
 His hond and cast upwárd his
 eye,

As though he Cristés face seic,
 So that it semeth atté sight
 As he alone al other might
 Rescué with his holy bede.²
 But yet his herte in other stede
 Among his bedés most devoute
 Goth in the worldés cause aboute,
 How that he might his warison³
 Encrese, and in comparison
 There ben lovés of suche a sorte,
 That feignen hem an humble porte,
 And al is but Ypocrisie,
 Which with deceipte and flaterie
 Hath many a worthy wife beguiled.
 For when he hath his tunge affiled
 With softé speche and with lesinge
 Than with his fals pitóus lokinge
 He woldé make a woman wene
 To gon upon the fairé grene,
 Whan that she falleth in the mire.
 For if he may have his desire,
 How so falle of the remenaunt.
 He halt⁴ no worde of covaenant,
 But er the timé that he spede
 There is no sleighte at thilké nede,
 Which any lovés faitour⁵ may,
 That he ne put it in assay
 As him belongeth for to done.
 The colour of the reiny mone

¹ *Norice*, nurse.

² *Precheth*, troubleth.

³ *Couvertur* of his fallas, concealment of his
 deceit.

⁴ *Set no tale*, makes no account.

⁵ *Him liketh*, it pleases him.

¹ *Asterte*, escape from.

² *Bede*, prayer.

³ *Warison*, advantage.

⁴ *Halt*, holds.

⁵ *Faitour*, dissembler.

With medicine upon his face
 He set, and than he axeth grace,
 As hewhich hath sikenessé feigned;
 Whan his viságe is so disteigned,
 With eye up cast on her he siketh
 And many a continuaunce he piketh¹
 To bringen her into beleve
 Of thing which that he wold acheve,
 Wherof he bereth the pale hewe,
 And for he woldé semé trewe
 He maketh him sike, whan he is
 heil.

But whan he bereth lowest sail,
 Than is he swiftest to beguile
 The woman which that ilké while
 Set upon him feith or credénce.

"My sone, if thou thy consciénce
 Entaméd² hast in such a wise,
 In shrifté thou the might avise
 And telle it me, if it be so."

"Min holy fader, certés no.
 As for to feigné such sikenesse
 It nedeth nought, for this witnesse
 I take of God, that my coráge³
 Hath ben more sike than my viságe.
 And eke this may I well awowe,
 So lowé couthe I never howe
 To feigne humilité withoute
 That me ne listé better loute
 With all the thoughtés of min herte.
 For that thing shall me never
 asterte,

I speke as to my lady dere,
 To make her any feigné chere;
 God wot well there I líe nought,
 My chere hath been such as my
 thought. *

For in good feith, this leveth wel,⁴
 My wil was better a thousand dele
 Than any cheré that I couthe.⁵

"But sire, if I have in my youthe

Done other wise in other place,
 I put me therof in your grace.
 For this excusen I ne shall,
 That I have ellés over all
 To Love and to his compaignie
 Be plein without ypocrisie.
 But there is one, the whiche I serve,
 All though I may no thank deserve,
 To whom yet never unto this day
 I saide onlich or 'ye' or 'nay,'
 But if it so were in my thought
 As touchend other say I nought
 That I nam somdele for to wite¹
 Of that ye clepe an ypocrite."

"My sone, it sit wel every wight
 To kepe his worde in trouth upright
 Towardés Love in allé wise.
 For who that wold him wel avise
 What hath befallé in this matére,
 Heshuldénought with feigné chere
 Deceivé Love in no degre.
 To Love is every herté fre,
 But in deceipt if that thou feignest
 And therupon thy luste atteignest,
 That thou hast wonné with thy wile,
 Though it thee líké for a while,
 Thou shalt it afterward repente.
 And for to prové min entente
 I finde ensample in a cronique
 Of hem that Lové so beswike.²

It fell by oldé daiés thus,
 Whil themperour Tiberius
 The monarchie of Romé ladde,
 There was a worthy Romain hadde
 A wife, and she Pauliné hight,
 Which was to every mannés sight
 Of al the cité the fairést
 And as men saiden eke the best.
 It is and hath ben ever yit
 That so strong is no mannés wit,
 Which through beauté ne may be
 drawe

To love, and stonde under the lawe

¹ *Piketh*, pitches, sets up.

² *Entaméd*, subdued.

³ *Corage*, disposition of the heart.

⁴ Believe well.

⁵ Than any face that I could put on.

¹ That I am not some part to blame.

² *Beswike*, deceive.

Of thilké boré¹ freilé kinde,
Which maketh the hertés eyen
blinde,

Where no resón may be communed.
And in this wisé stode fortunéd
Of whiche I wol this talé mene,
This wife, whiche in her lustés grene
Was faire and fressh and tender of
age.

She may nought letté the corage
Of him that wol on her assote.²
There was a Duke, and he was
hote³

Mundus, which had in his baillie⁴
To ledé the chevalérie
Of Rome, and was a worthy knight.
But yet he was nought of such might
The strength of lové to withstonde,
That he ne was so brought to honde,
That malgré where⁵ he wol or no
This yongé wife he loveth so,
That he hath put all his assay
To winné thing which he ne may
Get of her graunt in no manere,
By yeste of gold, ne by praier.
And whan he sigh,⁶ that by no
mede⁷

Toward her love he mighté spede,
By sleighté feignend than he
wrought :

And therupon he him bethought,
How that there was in the cité
A temple of suche auctorité,
To which with great devoción
The noble women of the towne
Most comunlich a pelerináge
Gone for to prayé thilke ymáge,
Which the goddesse of childing is
And clepéd was by name Ysis.
And in her temple thanné were
To reule and to minstre there

After the lawé which was tho,
Above all other prestés two.
This Duke, which thought his lové
get,

Upon a day hem two to mete
Hath bedé, and they come at his
heste,

Where that they had a riché feste.
And after mete in privé place
This lord, which wold his thank
purcháce,

To eche of hem yaf thanne a yift
And spaké so by waie of shrift,
He drough hem into his covíne¹
To helpe and shape, how he Pauline
After his lust deceivé might.
And they her² trouthés bothé plight,
That they by night her shulden
winne

Into the temple, and he therinne
Shall have of her all his entent.
And thus accorded forth they went.
Now list, through which Ypocrisie
Ordeigné was the trecherie,
Wherof this lady was deceived.
These prestés hadden wel con-
ceived,

That she was of great holinesse.
And with a counterfeit simplesse,
Which hid was in a fals coráge,
Feignend an heavenly messáge
They cam and saide unto her thus :
Pauliné, the god Anubus
Hath sent us bothé prestés here
And saith, he wol to the appere
By nightés time him selfe alone,
For love he hath to thy persone.
And therupon he hath us bedé,
That we in Ysis temple a stede
Honestly for thee purveie,
Where thou by night as we thee
saie

Of him shalt take a visión.

¹ *Bore*, born--born of that frail nature.

² *Assote*, dote. ³ *Hote*; called.

⁴ *Baillie*, office. ⁵ *Where*, whether.

⁶ *Sigh*, saw. ⁷ *Mede*, means, mode.

¹ *Covine*, secret treacherous agreement.

² *Her*, their.

For upon thy condici3n,
The whiche is chaste and full of
feith,

Suche price, as he us tolde, he leith,
That he wol stonde of thin accorde ;
And for to beare herof recorde
He sende us hider bothé two.
Glad was her innocéncé tho
Of suché wordés as she herd,
With humble chere and thus an-
swerd

And saidé, that the goddés will
She was all redy to fulfill,
That by her husebondés leve
She wolde in Ysis temple at eve
Upon her goddés graçe abide
To serven him the nightés tide.
The prestés tho gon home ayeine,
And she goth to her sovereigne ;
Of goddes will and as it was ¹
She tolde him all the plainé cas,
Wherof he was deceivéd eke,
And bad that she her shuldé mke
All hole unto the goddés heste.
And thus she, which was all honeste
To godward, after her entent
At night unto the temple went
Where that the falsé prestés were.
And they receívén her there
With suche a token of holinesse,
As though they seén a goddessse ;
And all within in privé place
A softé bedde of largé space
They haddé made and encortiné,
Where she was afterward enginé.²
But she, whiche all honour sup-
poseth,

The falsé prestés than opposeth
And axeth by what observaunce
She mighté most to the plesaunce
Of god that nightés reulé kepe.
And they her bidden for to slepe

¹ And she told all the plain case, of how it was the god's will. 'And' was not always placed at the beginning of a clause.

² Enginé, trapped by a crafty contrivance.

Liggend upon the bedde a loft,
For, so they said, al still and soft
God Anubus her wolde awake.
The counseil in this wisé take
The prestés fro this lady gone.
And she that wiste of guilé none
In the manér as it was said
To slepe upon the bedde is leid,
In hopé that she sholde acheve
Thing which stode than upon beleve
Fulfilléd of all holinesse.

But she hath failéd as I gesse,
For in a closet fasté by
The Duke was hid so prively,
That she him mighté nought per-
ceive.

And he that thoughté to deceive
Hath suche array upon him nome,¹
That whan he wold unto her come
It shuldé semen at her eye,
As though she verriliché seie
God Anubus, and in suche wise
This Ypocrite of his queintise
Awaiteth ever til she slept.
And than out of his place he crept
So stillé, that she nothing herde,
And to the bed stalkénd he ferde
And sodeinly, er she it wiste,
Beclipt in armés he her kiste,
Wherof in womannisshé drede
She woke and niste what to rede.²
But he with softé wordés milde
Comforteth her apd saith, with
childe

He wolde her make in suche a
kinde,
That al the world shall have in
minde

The worshippe of that ilké sone ;
For he shall with the goddes wone ³
And ben him selfe a god also.
With suché wordés and with mo,

¹ Nome, taken.

² Knew not what counsel to take.

³ If one, dwell.

The which he feigneth in his speche,
 This ladies wit was al to seche,¹
 As she which alle trouthe weneth.
 But he, that all untrouthé meneth,
 With blindé talés so her ladde,
 That all his will of her he hadde.
 And whan him thought it was inough,
 Ayein the day he him withdrough
 So prively, that she ne wiste
 Where he be come, but as him liste
 Out of the temple he goth his way.
 And she began to bid and pray,
 Upon the baré ground knelende,
 And after that made her offrende
 And to the prestés yeftés great
 She yaf, and homeward by the strete
 The Duke her mette and saidé thus :
 'The mighty god, whiche Anubus
 Is hote, he savé the Pauline,
 For thou art of his discipline
 So holy, that no mannés might
 May do that he hath do to night,
 Of thing which thou hast ever
 eschued.

But I his grace have so pursued,
 That I was made his lieutenaunt.
 Forth by way of covenauánt
 Fro this day forth I am all thine,
 And if thee liké to be mine
 That stant upon thin owné wille.²
 She herde his tale and hare it stille
 And home she went as it befell
 Into her chambere and there she fell
 Upon her bed to wepe and crie
 And saide : O derke Ypocrisie,
 Through whose dissimulation
 Of false ymaginación
 I am thus wickedly deceived !
 But that I have it apperceived
 I thonke unto the goddés alle.

¹ *All to seek*, all away, as she who believes all to be truth. 'To seek' was a phrase long used to represent want of knowledge. So the elder brother in Milton's *Comus*—

² I do not think my sister so *to seek*.
 Or so undisciplined in virtue's book.

For though it onés be befallé
 I shall never eft while that I live,
 And thilke avow to god I yive.
 And thus wepéndé she compleigneth
 Her fairé face and all disteigneth
 With wofull terés of her eye,
 So that upon this agonie
 Her husébónde is inné come
 And sigh¹ how she was overcome
 With sorwe, and axeth her what
 her eileth.

And she with that her self beweileth
 Well moré than she didde afore
 And said : 'Alas, wifhode is lore
 In me which whilom was honést,
 I am none other than a beste.
 Nowe I defouled am of two !'
 And as she mighté speaké tho
 Ashamed with a pitous onde,²
 She tolde unto her husébonde
 The soth of all the holé tale,
 And in her speché dead and pale
 She swouneth well nigh to the laste.
 And he her in his armés faste
 Upheld and ofté swore his oth,
 That he with her is nothing wroth,
 For wel he wot she may there
 nought.

But nethéles within his thought
 His hert stode in a sory plite
 And said, he wolde of that despite
 Be vengéd how so ever it falle ;
 And send unto his frendes alle,
 And whan they weré come inferé,³
 He tolde hem upon this matere
 And axeth hem what was to done.
 And they aviséd weré sone
 And said, it thought hem for the
 beste

To setté first his wife in reste
 And after pleiné to the king
 Upon the matter of this thing.
 Tho was his wofull wife comforted

¹ *Sigh*, saw.
² *Onde*, anger. ³ *Inferé*, together.

By alle waies and dispórted,
Til that she was somdele amended.
And thus a day or two dispended
The thriddé day she goth to pleine
With many a worthy citezeine
And he with many a citezein.
Whan themperour it herde saine
And knew the falsched of the vice,
He said he woldé do justice.
And first he let the prestes take,
And for they shulde it nought for-
sake¹

He put hem into question.
But they of the suggestiún
Ne couthé nought a word refuse,
But for they wold hem self excuse
The blame upon the Duke they
laide.

But thereyein the counseil saide,
That they be nought excuséd so
For he is one and they be two,
And two have moré wit than one,
So thilke excusément was none.
And over that, was said hem eke
That whan men wolden vertue seke
Men shulden it in the prestés finde,
Their ordre is of so high a kinde,
That they be divísers² of the wey.
Forthy if any man forswey³
Through hem, they be nought ex-
cusáble,

And thus by lawé resonáble
Among the wisé jugés there
The prestés bothé dampned were,
So that the privé trecherý
Hid under false Ypocrisie
Was thanne all openliché shewed,
That many a man hem hath be-
shrewed.

And whan the prestés weren dede,
The temple of thilk horribble dede
They thoughten purge and thilke
ymage

¹ Forsake, deny.

² Divísers, tellers.

³ Forswoy, swerve aside, go wrong.

Whose causé was the pelrináge
They drowen out and also faste
Fer into Tiber they it caste,
Where the rivér it hath defied.¹
And thus the temple purified
They have of thilke horribble sinne,
Which was that timé do² therinne.
Of this point such was the divise.
But of the duke was otherwise;
For³ he with lové was bestad
His dome was nought so hardé lad.
For lové put refón away
And can nought se the righté wey.
And by this cause he was respited,
So that the deth him was acquitted,
But for all that he was exiled,
For he his love had so beguiled,
That he shall never come ayeine.
For he that is to trouth unpleine
He may nought failen of vengeance
And eke to také remembraunce
Of that Ypocrisie hath wrought.
On other half, men shuldé nought
To lightly leve all that they here,
But thanné shulde a wiseman sterc
The ship, whan suché windés blowe;
For first though they beginné lowe,
At endé they be nought mevábile,⁴
But all to-broken mast and cable,
So that the ship, with sodain blast
Whan men leste wene, is overcast.
As now full ofte a man may se,
And of old time how it hath be
I finde a great experience,
Wherof to take an evidence
Good is, and to beware also
Of the perfill er him be woo.⁵

“Of hem that ben so derk
withinne

At Troie also if we beginne.

¹ Defied, digested. So in ‘The Vision of Piers Plowman,’ ‘wyn the roste to defy e.’

² At that time done.

³ For, because.

⁴ Mevábile, to be moved.

⁵ Before aye betides him.

Ypocrisie it hath betrayed.
 For whan the Grekes had all assaied
 And founde that by no bataile
 Ne by no siege it might availe
 The town to winné through prow-
 esse,

This Vicé feigné of simplese,
 Through sleight of Calcas and of
 Crise

It wan by such a maner wise :—
 An horse of brass they let do forge
 Of suche entaile,¹ of suche a forge,
 That in this world was never man
 That such an other werk began.
 The crafty werkeman Epius
 It made, and for to tellé thus,
 The Grekes that thoughten to be-
 guile

The king of Troie in thilké while
 With Antenór and with Eneç,
 That weré bothe of the citee
 And of the counseil the wisést,
 The richest and the mightiest,
 In privé placé so they trete
 With fair behesté and yestes grete
 Of gold, that they hem have enginod
 To-gider and whan they be covined,
 They feignen for to maké pees,
 And under that yet nethéless
 They shopen the destruction
 Bothe of the king and of the town.
 And thus the falsé pees was take
 Of hem of Grece and undertake,
 And therupon they founde a way,
 Where strenghté mighté nought
 away,

That sleighté shuldé helpé thanne,
 And of an inche a largé spanne,²
 By colour of the pees they made :
 And tolden how they weré glade
 Of that they stoden in accorde,
 And, for it shall ben of recorde,

Unto the king the Gregois saiden
 By way of love and thus they
 praiden,—

As they that wolden his thank
 deserve,

A sacrifice unto Minerve
 The pees to kepe in good entent
 They must offre, or that they went.
 The King, counseilé in the cas

By Antenór and Eneçs,
 Therto hath yoven his assent.

So was the pleiné trouthé blent¹
 Through counterfeit Ypocrisie.

Of that they shulden sacrifie
 The Grekes under the holinesse
 Anone with alle besinesse

Here hors of brass let fairé dight,
 Which was to sene a wonder sight.

For it was trappéd of him selve
 And had of smalé whelés twelve,
 Upon the whiché men inowe
 With craft toward the town it drowe,
 And goth glistrénd ayein the sonne.
 Tho was there joie inough begonne,
 For Troie in great devoción

Came also with processión
 Ayein this noble sacrifice
 With great honóur, and in this wise
 Unto the gatés they it broughte :
 But of here entré whan they soughte,
 The gatés weren all to smale.

And therupon was many a tale ;
 But for the worship of Minerve,
 To whom they comen for to serve,
 They of the town which understood
 That all this thing was done for
 good,

For pees, wherof that they ben
 glade,

The gatés that Neptunus made
 A thousand winter ther to-fore
 They have anone to-broke and tore,
 The strongé wallés down they bete,
 So that into the largé strete

¹ Entaile, carving.

² An ell should be got out of an inch under
 outward show of the peace made.

¹ Blent, blinded.

This horse with great solempnité
Was brought withinné the cité,
And offred with great reverence,
Which was to Troie an evidence
Of love and pees for evermo.
The Gregois token levé tho
With all the holé felaship,
And forth they wenten into ship,
And crossen sail, and made hem
yare,¹

Anone, as though they wolden fare,²
But whan the blacké winter night
Withouté mone or sterré light
Bederkéð hath the water stronde,
Al privély they gone to londe
Full arméd out of the havie.
Sinon, whiche made was here espie
Withinné Troie, as was conspired,
Whan timé was, a tokne hath fired,
And they with that here waie holden
And comen in, right as they wolden,
There as the gaté was to-broke.
The purpose was full take and spoke
Er any man may teké kepe,
Whil that the citec was aslepe;
They slown al that was withinne.
And token what they mightenwinne
Of such good as was suffisaunt
And brenden³ up the remenaunt.
And thus come out the trecherie,
Which under false Ypocrisie
Was hid, and they that wendé⁴ pees
Tho mighten findé no releese
Of thilké swerd whiche al de-
voureth.

Full ofte and thus the sweté soureth
Whan it is knowé to the taste,
He spilleth many a worde in waste
That shal with such a people trete,
For whan he weneth most beyete⁵
Than is he shapé most to lese.

¹ Yare, ready.

² As though they would go.

³ Brenden, burnt.

⁴ Wéndé, hoped for, expected.

⁵ When he expects to get most.

And right so if a woman chese¹
Upon the wordés that she hereth,
Som man whan he most true ap-
pereth

Than is he furthest fro the trouthe.
But yet full ofte, and that is routhe,
They speden that ben most untrue
And loven every day a newe,
Wherof the life is after lothe
And love hath causé to be wrothe.
But what man that his lust desireth
Of love and therupon conspireth
With wordés feigné to deceive,
He shall nought failé to receive
His peine as it is ofté sene.

"Forthy my sone, as I the mene,
It sit thee well to taken hede,
That thou escheuc of thy manhede
Ypocrisie and his semblaunt,
That thou ne be nought deceivaunt
To make a woman to beleve
Thing whiche is nought in thy
beleve.

For in suche feint Ypocrisie
Of Love is all the trecherie,
Through which love is deceived
ofte.

For feigné semblaunt is so softe,
Unnethés² Lové may be ware.
Forthy my sone, as I well dare,
I chargé the to flee that vice,
That many a woman hath made
nice,
But loke thou delé nought with-
all."—

"Iwis³ my fader, no more I
shall."—

"Now, soné, kepe that thou hast
swore.

For this that thou hast herd before
Is said the firsté point of Pride.
And next upon that other side

¹ Chese, choose.

² Unnethés, not easily.

³ Iwis ("gewis") certainly.

To shrive and speken over this,
Touchend of Pridé, yet there is
The Point Secónde I thee behote,¹
Which Inobedience is hote.

Inobedience.

This Vice of Inobedience
Ayein the reule of consciéce
All that is humble he disalloweth,
That he toward his God ne boweth
After the lawés of his heste.²
Nought as a man, but as a beste
Whiche goth upon his lustés wilde
So geth this proudé Vice unmilde,
That he disdaineth allé lawe.
He not³ what is to be felawe,
And servé may he nought for pride.
So is he ledde on every side
And is that selve of whom men
speke,

Which woll nought bowe er that he
breke.

I not³ if Lové might him plie,⁴
For ellés for to justifie
His herte, I not³ what might availe.
Forthy⁵ my sone, of suche entaile
If that thin herté be disposed,
Telle out and let it nought be glosed.
For if that thou unbuxome⁶ be
To love, I not³ in what degre
Thou shalt thy goodé worde
acheve." --

"My fader, ye shal well beleve,
The yongé whelpé which is affaited⁷
Hath nought his maister better
awaited

To couché whan he saith : go lowe,
Than I anone as I may knowe
My lady will me bowé more.

¹ *Behote*, promised.

² *Heste*, commandment.

³ *Nok*, knows not.

⁴ *Plie*, bend.

⁵ *Forthy*, therefore.

⁶ *Unbuxome*, unbending, un-bow-some.

⁷ *Affaited*, bound to some object, tamed.

But other while I grucché sore
Of some thingés that she doth,
Wherof that I woll tellé soth.
For of two pointes I am bethought,
That though I wolde I mighté nought
Obeie unto my ladies hest ;
But I dare maké this behest
Sauf only of that ilké two,
I am unbuxome of no mo."

"What ben tho two, tell on," quod
he.

"My fader, this is one, that she
Commaundeth me my mouthe to
close,

And that I shulde her nought oppose
In love, of whiche I ofte preche,
And plenerlich¹ of suche a speche
Forbere and suffre her in pees.

But that ne might I nethéles
For all this worlde obey iwis.²

For whan I am there as she is,
Though she my talés nought allowe,
Ayein her will yet mote I bowe
To seche if that I might have grace.
But that thing may I nought em-
brace

For ought that I can speke or do.
And yet full ofte I spoké so,
That she is wroth and saith : be
stille.

If I that hesté shall fulfille
And therto ben obediént,
Than is my causé fully shent,
For spechéles may no man spede.
So wote I nought what is to rede.³
But certés I may nought obeie,
That I ne mote algaté⁴ saie
Some what of that I woldé mene,
For ever it is aliché grene
The greaté lové which I have,
Wherof I can nought bothé save
My speche and this obedience.

¹ *Plenerlich*, fully, wholly.

² *Iwis*, certainly.

³ I know not what is to be counselled.

⁴ *Algate*, always.

And thus full ofté my silence
I breke, and is the firsté point
Wherof that I am out of point
In this, and yet it is no Pride.

"Now than upon that other side
To tell my disobeisaunce,
Full sore it stant to my grevaunce
And may nought sinke into my wit.
Full ofté timé she me bit¹
To leyen her and chese a newe ;
And saith, if I the sothé knewe
How fer I stondé from her grace,
I shuldé love in other place.
But therof wol I disobeie,
For also wel she mighté saie
'Go take the moné there it sit,'
As bringé that into my wit.
For there was never rooted tree
That stood so faste in his degree,
That I ne stondé moré faste
Upon her love, and may nought
caste

Min herte away all though I wolde.
For God wote though I never sholde
Sene her with eye after this daie,
Yet stant it so, that I ne maie
Her love out of my brest remue.
This is a wonder retenue,
That malgré where² she woll or
none

Min herte is evermo in one,
So that I can none other chese,
But whether that I winne or lese
I must her loven till I deie ;
And thus I breke, as by that weie,
Her hestés and her commaundinges.
But trulich in none other thinges.
Forthý my fader, what is more
Touchende unto this ilké lore
I you beseche, after the forme
That ye plainly me wolde enforme,
So that I may min herté reule
In Lovés cause after the reule."

¹ *Bit*, prays.

² *Where*, whether.

Murmur and Complaint.

Toward this Vice of which we
tete

There ben yet tweie of thilke
estrete,¹

Her² name is Murmur and Com-
pleinte.

Ther can no man her cheré peinte
To sette a glad semblaunt ther-
inne :

For though Fortuné make hem
winne,

Yet grucchen they ; and if they lese
There is no waic for to chese
Wherof they mighten stonde ap-
pesed.

So ben they comunly disesed,
There may no welth ne no pouerte
Attempren hem to the deserte³
Of buxomnessé by no wise.

For ofté timé they despise
The goodé fortune as the badde,
As they no mannés reson hadde,
Through Pridé wherof they be
blinde.

And right of such a maner kinde
Ther be lovér's, that though they
have

Of love all that they woldé crave,
Yet woll they grucché by some
weie,

That they wol nought to love obeie
Upon the trouth, as they do sholde.
And if hem lacketh that they wolde,
Anon they falle in such a peine,
That ever unbuxomly they pleine
Upon Fortune and curse and eric,
That they wol nought her hertes
plie

To suffre, till it better falle.
Forthý if thou amongés alle

¹ *Of thilke estrete*, of the same street, neigh-
bours.

² *Her*, their

³ *Deserte*, merit.

Hast uséd this condición,
My sone, in thy Confessiôn
Now tell me plainly what thou
art.”—

“My fader, I beknowe¹ a part
So as ye tolden here above
Of Murmur and Compleint of Love;
That for I se no spede coménde,
Ayein Fortúné compleignénde
I am, as who saith, evermo
And eke full ofté time also.
Whan so as that I se or here
Of hevy word or hevy chere
Of my lady, I grucche anone,
But wordés dare I speke none
Wherof she mighté be displesed.
But in min herte I am disesed
With many a Murmur god it wote,
Thus drinke I in min owné swote.²
And though I maké no semblaunt,
Min herte is all disóbeisaunt,
And in this wise I me confesse
Of that ye clepe Unbuxomnesse.
Now telleth what your counseil
is.”—

“My sone, as I thee redé this,
What so befall of other weie,
That thou to lovés hest obeie
Als fer as thou it might suffise.
For ofté sith³ in such a wise
Obedience in love availeth,
Where all a mannés strengthé
faileth :

Wherof if that thee list to wit,
In a cronique as it is writ
A great ensample thou might finde,
Which now come is into my minde.

There was whilom by daiés olde
A worthy knight, and as men tolde
He was neveu to themperour
And of his court a courtedour.
Wifeles he was, Florent he hight,
He was a man that mochel might.

¹ *Beknowe*, confess. ² *Swote*, sweat.
³ *Ofte sith*, oftentimes.

Of armés he was desiróus,
Chiváleróus and amoróus,
And for the fame of worldés speche
Straunge aventúrés for to seche
He rode the marches all aboute.
And fell a time, as he was oute, .
Fortúné, which may every threde
To-breke¹ and knitte of mannés
spede,²

Shope, as this knight rode in a pas,
That he by strengthé taken was,
And to a castell they him ladde,
Where that he fewé frendés hadde.
For so it fell that ilké stounde,
That he hath with a dedly wounde,
Fightend, his owne hondes slain
Branchus, whiche to the Capitain
Was sone and heire, wherof ben
wrothe

The fader and the moder bothe.
That knight Branchus was of his
honde

The worthiest of all his londe,
And fain they wolden dovengeaunce
Upon Florent, but remembraunce
That they toke of his worthinesse,
Of knighthode and of gentillesse,
And how he stood of cousinage
To themperour, made hem assuage,
And dorsté nought slaine him for
fere.

In great desputeson they were
Among hem selfe, that³ was the
best.

There was a lady, the sliest
Of allé that men knewen tho,
So olde she might unnethés go,
And was grauntdamé to the dede.
And she with that began to rede⁴
And saide hem she wol bring him
inne,

That she shal him to dethé winne

¹ *To-breke*, break up altogether. To- is an
intensive prefix.

² *Spede*, prosperity.

³ What.

⁴ *Rede*, counsel.

All only of his owné graunt
Through strength of verray cove-
naunt ¹

Withouté blame of any wight,
Anone she sendé for this knight
And of her soné she alleide ²
The deth, and thus to him she
saide :

‘Florent, how so ever thou be to
wite ³

Of Branchus deth, men shal respite
As now to také vengément,
Be so thou stonde in jugément
Upon certein condición,
That thou unto a questión
Which I shall axé shalt answece.
And over this thou shalt eke swere,
That if thou of the sothé faile,
There shal non other thinge availle,
That thou ne shalt thy deth receive;
And for men shal thee nought de-
ceive

That thou therof might ben advised,
Thou shalt have day and time
assised

And levé sauflý for to wende,
Be so that at thy daiés ende
Thou come ayein with thin avise.
This knight, which worthy was and
wise,

This lady praieth, that he may wit
And have it under sealés writ,
What question it sholdé be
For which he shall in that degre
Stonde of his life in jeopartie.
With that she feigneth compaignie
And saith : ‘Florent, on love it
hongeth

All that to min axingé longeth :—
What allé women most desire—
This woll I axe, and in thempire
Where thou hast mosté know-
leching

Také counsél of this axinge.
Florent this thing hath undertake ;
The day was set and timé take ;
Under his seale he wrote his othe
In such a wise, and forth he gothe
Home to his emés ¹ courte ayein,
To whom his aventuré plein
He tolde, of that is him befallé.
And upon that they weren alle
The wisest of the londe assent,
But nethéles of one assent
They mighté nought accordé plat,
One saidé this, an other that ;
After the dispositiön
Of natural complexiön
To some woman it is plesaunce
That to another is grevaunce,
But suche a thinge in speciáll
Whiche to hem alle in generall
Is most plesaunt and most desired
Above all other and most con-
spired,

Suche o ² thing conné they nought
finde

By constellatiön ne kinde.³
And thus Florent withouté cure
Mot stonde upon his aventure
And is al shape unto the lere,⁴
And in defaulte of his answeré
This knight hath lever for to deie
Than breke his trouth, and for to lie
In placé whéré he was swore,
And shapeth him gone ayein ⁵ ther-
fore.

“Whan timé cam he toke his leve
That lenger wolde he nought be-
leve ⁶

And praieth his eme he be nought
wroth,
For that is a point of his oth,

¹ *Eme*, uncle.

² *O*, one.

³ *Kind*, nature.

⁴ *Lere*, learning (finding the answer to the question).

⁵ Makes himself ready to go back again.

⁶ *Beleve*, remain.

¹ *Verray covenant*, a true agreement.

² *Alleide*, alleged. ³ *To wite*, to blame.

He saith, that no man shal him
wreke,¹

Though afterward men heré speke
That he perávënturé deie.

And thus he wenté forth his weie
Alone as a knight aventuróus
And in his thought was curióus
To witté what was best to do.

And as he rode aloné so
And cam nigh there he woldé be,
In a forést there under a tree
He sigh² where sat a creätüre,
A lothly womannish figüre,
That for to speke of flesshe and
bone

So foule yet sigh he never none.
This knight behelde her redily,
And as he wolde have passéd by
She clepéd him and bad abide.
And he his hors hevé³ aside
Tho⁴ tornéd and to her he rode
And there he hovéd⁵ and abode
To witté⁶ what she woldé mene.
And she began him to bemene⁷
And saidé : 'Florent, by thy name
Thou hast on hondé such a game
That but thou be the better avised
Thy deth is shapen and devised,
That al the world ne may thee save,
But if⁸ that thou my counseil have.'

Florent whan he this talé herde,
Unto this oldé wight answérde
And of her counseil he her praide.
And she ayein to him thus saide :
'Florent, if I for thee so shape,
That thou through me thy deth
escape

And také worship of thy dede,
What shall I havé to my mede?'
'What thing,' quod he, 'that thou
wolde axe.'

'I bid never a better taxe,'
Quod she, 'but first, or thou be
sped,

Thou shalt me leyé suche a wed¹
That I woll have thy trouth on
honde,

That thou shalt be min husébonde.'
'Nay,' saith Florent, 'that may
nought be.'

'Ridé thanne forth thy way,' quod
she,

'And if thou go withouté rede,
Thou shalt be sekerliché dede.'

Florent behight² her good enough
Of londe, of rent, of parke, of
plough,

But all that compteth she at nought.
Tho fell this knight in mochel
thought,

Now goth he forth, now cometh
ayein,

He wot nought what is best to sain,
And thought as he rode to and fro,
That chese he mote one of the two—
Or for to take her to his wife
Or ellés for to lese his life.

And than he caste his avauntáge,
That she was of so great an age
That she may livé but a while,
And thought to put her in an ile
Where that no man her shuldé
knowe

Til she with deth were overthrowe.
And thus this yongé lusty knight
Unto this oldé lothly wight
Tho said : 'If that none other
chaunce

May maké my deliveraunce
But only thilké samé speche
Which as thou saist thou shalt me
teche,

Have here min honde, I shal thee
wedde.'

¹ Wreke, avenge.

² Sigh, saw.

³ Hevé^d, head.

⁴ Tho, then.

⁵ Hovéd, waited.

⁶ To witté, to know.

⁷ Bemene, bemoan.

⁸ But if, unless.

¹ Wed, pledge.

² Behight, promised.

And thus his trouth he leith to
wedde.

With that she frounceth up the
browe :

‘This covenant wolle I allowe,’

She saith, ‘if any other thing

But that thou hast of my teching

Fro deth thy body may respite,

I wolle thee of thy trouth acquite,

And elles by none other waie.

Now herken me what I shall saie :

Whan thou art come into the
place,

Where now they maken great
manace

And upon thy coming abide,

They wolle anon the same tide

Oppose thee of thine answer.

I wot thou wolt no thing forbere

Of that thou weneest be thy beste,

And if thou might so find rest

Wel is, for than is ther no more.

And elles this shall be my lore,

That thou shalt saie :—Upon this

Molde

That alle Women levest wolde

Be Sovereign of Mannes Love :—

For what woman is so above

She hath, as who saith, all her wille,

And elles may she nought fulfille

What thinge her were levest have.

With this answer thou shalt save

Thy self, and other wise nought.

And whan thou hast thy ende
wrought,

Come here ayein, thou shalt me
finde,

And let nothinge out of thy minde.’

He goth him forth with hevy chere,

As he that not¹ in what manere

He may this worldes joie atteigne :

For if he deie he hath a peine ;

And if he live he mote him binde

To suche one which of alle kinde

Of women is the unseemlieste.

Thus wot he nought what is the
beste.

But be him lief or be him loth

Unto the castel forth he goth

His full answer for to yive

Or for to deie or for to live.

Forth with his counseil came the
lorde,

The thinges stoden of recorde,

He send up for the lady sone,

And forth she cam that olde mone.¹

In presence of the remenaunt

The strengthe of all the covenant

Tho was rehersed openly,

And to Florent she bad forthy

That he shall tellen his advise

As he that wot what is the prise.

Florent saith all that ever he couth,

But such word cam ther none to
mouth,

That he for yeste or for behest

Might any wise his deth areste.

And thus he tarieth longe and late,

Til that this lady bad algate

That he shall for the dome finall

Yef² his answer in speciall

Of that she had him first opposed.

And than he hath truly supposed,

That he him may of nothing yelpe,³

But if so by the wordes helpe

Which as the woman hath him
taught,

Wherof he hath an hope caught

That he shall be excused so,

And tolde out plain his will tho.

And whan that this matrone herde

The maner how this knight an-
swerde,

She said : ‘Ha, treson ! Wo thee be

That hast thus tolde the privet,

Whiche alle women most desire !

I woldé that thou were afire !’

¹ Mone, wicked one, hag.

* Yef, give.

³ Yelpe, boast.

¹ Not, knows not.

But nethéles in suche a plite
 Florent of his answe're is quite.
 And tho began his sorwé newe,
 For he mot gone or ben untrewé
 To hiré which his trouthe hadde.
 But he, which allé shamé dradde,
 Goth forth in stede of his penaunce
 And taketh the fortune of his
 chaunce

As he that was with trouth affaited.¹
 This olde wight him hath awaited
 In placé where as he her lefte,
 Florent his wofull hed up lifte
 And sigh this vecke² where that
 she syt,

Which was the lothliesté wyght,
 That ever man cast on his eye.
 Her nasé bass,³ her browés high,
 Her eyen smal and depé set,
 Her chekés ben with terés wet
 And rivelin⁴ as an empty skin
 Hangend down unto the chin,
 Her lippés shrunken ben for age,
 There was no grace in her viságe,
 Her front was narwe, her lockés
 hore,

She loketh forth as doth a more,⁵
 Her necke is short, her shulders
 courbe,

That might a mannés lust dis-
 tourbe,

Her body great and no thing small,
 And shortly to descrive her all
 She hath no lith⁶ without a lack;
 But liche unto the wollé sack
 She profreth her unto this knight
 And bad him, as he hath behight,
 So as she hath by his warránt,
 That he her holdé coveñaúnt.
 And by the bridell-she him seseth,

¹ With *trouth affaited*, bound to truth only. Goods and chattels might be promised in Old French 'pour estre et demourer affaiz et ypothequez.'

² *Vecke*, old woman.

³ *Bass*, low.

⁴ *Rivelin*, wrinkled, shrunk.

⁵ *Witch*, hag.

⁶ *Lith*, limb.

But god wot how that she him
 pleseth

Of suché wordés as she speketh:
 Him thenketh wel nigh his herté
 breketh

For sorwe that he may nought fle
 But if¹ he wolde untrewé be.
 Ioke, how a seke man for his hele
 Taketh baldemoin with caneles²

And with the mirré taketh the
 sucre,

Right upon such a maner lucre
 Stant Florent, as in this diete
 He drinketh the bitter with the
 swete,

He medleth sorwe with líking
 And liveth so as who saith dyíng.
 His youthé shall be cast away
 Upon suche one, which as the way
 Is olde and lothly overall.

But nede he mot that nedé shall
 He wolde algate his trouthe holde
 As every knight therto is holde
 What hap so him is ever befallé,
 Though she be the foulést of alle.
 Yet to thonour of womanhed
 Him thought he shuldé taken heed,
 So that for puré gentilesse
 As he her couthé best adresse,
 In raggés as she was to-tore
 He set her on his hors to-fore,
 And forth he taketh his way softe.
 No wonder though he siketh³ ofte.
 But as an oulé fleeth by nighte
 Out of all other briddés sighte,
 Right so this knight on daiés brode
 In close him held, and shope his
 rode

On nightés timé till the tide
 That he come there he wolde abide,
 And prively withouté noise
 He bringeth this foulé greaté coise⁴

¹ But *if*, unless.

² *Baldemoin with caneles*, gentian with cin-
 namon.

³ *Siketh*, sigheth.

⁴ *Coise*, mistress.

BOOK I.—PRIDE.

To his castell in suche a wise,
 That no man might her shape avise,
 Til she into the chambre came,
 Where he his privé counseil name
 Of¹ suché men as he most truste
 And told hem, that he nedés muste
 This besté² weddé to his wife,
 For ellés had he lost his life.
 The privé women were assent³
 That sholden ben of his assent.
 Her raggés they anone of drawe
 And as it was that timé lawe
 She haddé bath, she haddé rest,
 And was arraiéd to the best.
 But with no craft of oombés brode
 They might her horé lockés shode.⁴
 And she ne woldé nought be shore
 For no counseil, and they therfore
 With suche attire as tho was used
 Ordeinen,⁵ that it was excused
 And had so craftilich aboute
 That no man mighté seen hemoute.⁶
 But whan she was fullich arraiéd
 And her attire was all assaiéd,
 Tho was she fouler unto se.
 But yet it may non other be,
 They weré wedded in the night;
 So wo begone was never knight
 As he was than of mariáge.
 And she began to pleie and rage
 As who saith, I am well inough;
 But he therof nothing ne lough.⁷
 For she toke thanné chere on honde
 And clepeth him her husébonde
 And saith: 'My lord, go we to
 bedde,
 For I to that ententé wedde
 That thou shalt be my worldés
 blisse.'

¹ Took private counsel with.

² This beast.

³ Assent, sent to her.

⁴ Part her hoary locks.

⁵ Set it in order.

⁶ So craftily surrounded with the customary headgear that one could see any grey locks peep out of it.

⁷ Lough, laughed.

And profreth him with that to kisse,
 As she a lusty lady were.
 His body mighté well be there,
 But as of thought and memorie
 His hert was in purgatorie.
 But yet for strengthe of matrimoine
 He mighté maké non essoine,
 That he ne mote alगतés plie
 To gon to bed of compaignie.
 And whan they were a beddé naked
 Withouté slepe he was awaked,
 He torneth on that other side
 For that he wolde his eyen hide
 Fro loking of that foulé wight.
 The chamber was all full of light,
 The courtines were of sendall
 thinne,
 This newé bride which lay withinne,
 Though it be nought with his
 accorde,
 In armés she beclept her lorde
 And praid, as he was tornéd fro
 He wolde him torne ayeinward tho.
 'For now,' she saith, 'we be both
 one.'
 But he lay stille as any stone,
 And ever in one she spake and
 praide
 And bad him thenke on that he
 saide,
 Whan that he toke her by the honde.
 He herd and understood the bonde,
 How he was set to his penance.
 And as it were a man in traunce
 He torneth him all sodeinly
 And sigh a lady lay him by
 Of eightené winter age,
 Which was the fairest of visage,
 That ever in all this world he sigh.
 And as he wolde have take her
 nigh,
 She put her hond, and by his leve
 Besought him that he woldé leve,
 And saith, that for to winne or lese
 He mot one of two thingés chese,

Where¹ he woll have her such on
night

Or ellés upon daiés light,
For he shall nought have bothé
two.—

And he began to sorwe tho
In many a wise and caste his
thought,

But for al that yet couth he nought
Devise him self which was the best.
And she that wolde his hertés rest
Praieth that he shulde chese algate,
Til at the lasté longe and late
He saide: 'O, ye my livés hele,
Say what ye liste in my quarele.

I not² what answeere I shall yive,
But ever while that I may live
I woll that ye be my maistresse;
For I can nought my selfé gesse
Which is the best unto my choís,
Thus graunt I you min holé vois,
Chesé for us bothe, I you praie,
And what as ever that ye saie,
Right as ye wollé so woll I.'

'My lord,' she saidé, 'graunt mercy,
For of this word that ye now sain
That ye have made me Soverein
My destiné is overpassed,
That never hereafter shall be
lassed³

My beauté which that I now have,
Til I be take into my grave.
Both night and day as I am now
I shall all way be such to you
'The kingés daughter of Cecile
I am; and fell but sith a while,⁴
As I was with my fader late,
Thai my stepmoder for an hate,
Whichtoward me shelhath begonne,
Forshope⁵ me, till I haddé wonne
The love and the sovéreinté

Of what knight that in his degré
All other passeth of good name.
And as men sain ye ben the same
The dedé proveth it is so;
Thus am I yourés evermo.'

Tho was plesaunce and joie inough,
Echone with other pleid and lough,
They livé longe, and well they ferde,
And clerkés that this chauncé herde
They writen it in evidence
To teche how that obedience
May well fortune a man to love
And set him in his luste above,
As it befell unto this knight.

"Forthy, any sone, if thou do
right,

Thou shalt unto thy love obeie
And folwe her will by allé weie."—
"Min holy fader, so I will.

For ye have told me such a skill
Of this ensample now to-fore,
That I shall evermo therfore
Here afterward min observsaunce
To love and to his obeissaunce
The better kepe, and over this¹
Of Pride if there ought ellés is
Wherof that I me shrivé shall,
What thing it is in speciall,
My fader, axeth, I you pray."—

"Now list, my sone, and I shall say.
For yet there is Surquederie,²
Which stant with Pride of com-
paignie,

Wherof that thou shalt here anone
To knowe if thou have gult or
none,

Upon the forme as thou shalt here;
Now understond well the matere.

Surquederie.

Surquederie is thilké Vice
Of Pridé which the third office

¹ *Where, whether.*

² *Not, know not.*

³ *Lassed, lessened.*

⁴ *Sith a while, a while since.*

⁵ *Forshope, transformed.*

¹ *Over this, beyond this.*

² *Surquederie, presumption.*

Hath in his court and wol nought
knowe

The trouthe till it overthrowe,
Upon his fortune and his grace
Cometh *had I wist*¹ full ofte a place,
For he doth all his thing by gesse
And voideth all sikernes; ;
None other counseil good him
semeth

But such as he him self demeth.
For in such wise as he compasseth
His wit alone all other passeth,
And is with Pride so thorough
sought

That he all other set at nought,
And weneth of him selven so
That such as he there be no mo
So fair, so semely, ne so wise,
And thus he wold beare a prise
Above all other, and nought forthy
He saith nought ones graunt mercy²
To God, which all gracé sendeth,
So that his wittes he despendeth
Upon him selfe, as though there were
No God which might availé there,
But all upon his owné wit
He stant, till he fall in the pit
So fer that he may nought arise.

"And right thus in the samé wise
The Vice upon the cause of Love
So proudly set the hert above
And doth him plainly for to wene,
That he to loven any quene
Hath worthinesse and suffisaunce,
And so withouté purveiaunce
Full ofte he heweth up so highe,
That chippes fallen in his eye;
And eke full ofte he weneth this,
There as he nought belovéd is

¹ *Had I wist*, if I had only known. "*Had-I-wist*" was a popular phrase for the repentance of the rash. So in Spenser's "*Mother Hubbard's Tale*."

² "Most miserably man, whom wicked Fate
Hath brought to court, to sue for *Had-y-wist*!"

³ *Graunt mercy*, gramercy, great thanks!

To be belovéd altherbeste.
Now, soné, telle what so thee leste
Of this that I have told thee here."—

"Ha fader, be nought in a were.¹

I trowé there be no man lesse
Of any maner worthinesse
That halt him lesse worthy than I
To be belovéd, and nought forthy
I say in excusing of me

To allé men, that love is fre.
And certés that may no man werne.²
For love is of him selfe so derne,³
It luteth⁴ in a mannes herte.

But that ne shall me nought asterte⁵

To wené for to be worthy
To loven, but in her mercy.

But sir, of that ye woldé mene,
That I shulde other wisé wene
To be belovéd than I was,
I am beknowe as in this cas."—

"My godé soné, telle me how."—

"Now list, and I woll tellé you,
My godé fader, how it is.

Full ofte it hath befalle er this
Through hopé, that was nought
certein,

My wening hath be set in vein
To trust in thing that helpe me
nought

But onlich of min owné thought.
For as it semeth that a bell
Like to the wordés that men tell
Answereth right so, no more ne
lesse,

To you, my fader, I confesse
Such will my wit hath over set,
That what so hopé me behet⁶
Full many a time I wene it soth,
But finally no spede it doth.
Thus may I tellen, as I can,
Wening beguileth many a man.

¹ *In a were*, in confusion or doubt

² *Werne*, refuse ³ *Derne*, secret.

⁴ *Luteth*, lies hidden.

⁵ Drive me to think myself worthy of love,
but through her mercy.

⁶ *Me behet*, promises me.

So hath it me, right wel I wot,
 For if a man wol in a bote
 Whiche is withouté botmé rowe,
 He must nedés be overthrowe.
 Right so wening hath fard by me,
 For whan I wendé next have be
 As I by my wening caste,
 Than was I furthest atté laste,
 And as a fool my bowe unbende
 Whan all was failéd that I wende.
 Forthý, my fader, as of this
 That my wening hath gone amis
 Touchend unto surquederie,
 Yef me my penaunce or I die.
 But if ye wolde in any forme
 Of this matér a tale enforme,
 Which were ayein this Vicé set,
 I shuldé faré well the bet."—

"**My sone**, in allé maner wise
 Surquederie is to despise,
 Wherof I findé writé thus :—
 The proudé knight Capaneus
 He was of suche surquederie,
 That he through his chivalerie
 Upon him self so mochel triste,¹
 That to the goddés him ne liste
 In no quarelé to beseche,
 But saide it was an idel speche
 Which causé was of puré drede,
 For lacke of hert and for no nede.
 And upon such presumption
 He held this proude opinió,
 Til' atté laste poune a day
 Abouté Thebés, where he lay,
 Whan it of siegé was belaine,
 This knight, as the croníqués saine,
 In allé mannés sighté there,
 Whan he was proudest in his gere
 And thought how nothing might
 him dere,²
 Full arméd with his shield and
 spere

As he the cité wolde assaile,
 God toke him selfé the bataile

¹ *Triste*, trusted.

² *Dere*, hurt.

Ayein his pride, and fro the sky
 A firy thonder sodeinly
 He sende and him to poudre smote.
 And thus the Pridé, which was hote
 Whan he most in his strenghté
 wende,

Was brent and lost withouten ende.
 So that it proveth well therfore
 The strength of man is soné lore,¹
 But if² that he it well góverne.
 And over this a man may lerne,
 That eke full ofté time it greveth
 What that a man him self beleveth,
 As though it shulde him well beseme
 That he all other men can deme³
 And hath foryete his owné vice.

A tale of hem that be so nice
 And feigne hem self to be so wise
 I shall thee telle in suche a wise,
 Wherof thou shalt ensample take,
 That thou no such thing undertake.

I finde upon surquederie,
 How that whilom of Hungarie
 By oldé daiés was a king
 Wise and honést in allé thing.
 And so befell upon a daie,
 And that was in the month of May,
 As thilké time it was usaúnce,
 This king with noble purveiaúnce
 Hath for himselfe his chare⁴ arraided,
 Wherin he woldé ride amaied⁵
 Out of the cite for to pleie
 With lordés and with great nobleie
 Of lusty folk that weré yonge,
 Where somé pleide and somé songe,
 And somé gone and somé ride,
 And somé prick her horse aside
 And bridlen hem now in now oute.
 The kinge his eyé cast aboute,
 Til he was atté lasté ware
 And sigh coménd ayein his chare

¹ *Lore*, lost.

² *But if*, unless.

³ *Deme*, judge.

⁴ *Chare*, chariot.

⁵ *Amaied*, a-Maying. Professor Skeat, in explaining this peculiar construction, started from the phrase in "Piers Plowman" "they gon a begged" for "they go a begging."

Two pilgrimés of so great age,
That lich unto a drie ymage
They weren pale and fadé hewed,
And as a busshe, whiche is be-
snewed,

Here berdés weren hore and white,
There was of kindé¹ but a lite
That they ne semen fully dede.
They comen to the king and bede²
Some of his good, pur³ charité.
And hé with great humilité
Out of his chare to groundé lepte
And hem in both his armes kepte
And kist hem bothé foot and honde
Before the lordés of his londe
And yaf hem of his good therto.
And whan he hath this dedé do
He goth into his chare ayeine.
Tho⁴ was murmur, tho was dis-
deine,

Tho was compleinte on every side,
They saiden of their owné pride
Echone till other, 'What is this?
Our king hath do this thing amis
So to abesse⁵ his roialté,
That every man it mighté se,
And humbled him in such a wise
To hem that were of none emprise.'
Thus was it spoken to and fro
Of hem that weré with him tho
All privély behinde his backe.
But to him selfé no man spake.
The kingés brother in presénce
Was thilké time, and great offence
He toke therof and was the same
Above all other which moste blame
Upon his legé lord hath laid,
And hath unto the lordés said
Anone as he may timé finde,
There shall nothing be left behinde,
That he wol speke unto the king.
Now list what fell upon this thing.

The weder was merie and fair
inough,

Echone with other pleid and lough
And fallen into talés newe,
How that the fresshé flourés grewe,
And how the grené levés spronge,
And how that love amonge the
yonge

Began the hertés thanne awake,
And every brid hath chose his
make.

And thus the Maiés day to thende
They lede, and home aycin they
wende.

The king was nought so soné come,
That whan he had his chambre
nome,

His brother ne was redy there
And brought a tale unto his ere
Of that he diddé such a shame
In hindring of his owné name,
Whan he him selfé woldé dreche¹
That to so vile a pouer wrecche
Him deigneth shewé such simplese
Aycin the state of his noblesse.
And saith, he shall it no more use
And that he mot him selfe excuse
Toward his lordés everichone.

The king stood still as any stone
And to his tale an ere he laide
And thoughté moré than he saide.
But nethéles to that he herde
Well curteisly the king answerde
And tolde, it shuldé ben amended.
And thus whan that here tale is
ended,

All redy was the bord and cloth,
The king unto his souper goth
Among the lordés to the halle.
And whan they haddé soupéd alle,
They token leve and forth they go.
The king bethought him selfé tho,
How he his brother may chastie,
That he through his surquederie

¹ *Of kindé*, by nature *lite*, little.

² *Bede*, pray.

⁴ *Tho*, then.

³ *Pur* (*pour*), for.

⁵ *Abesse*, abase.

¹ *Dreche*, trouble.

Toke upon hondé to dispreise
Humilité, which is to preise,
And therupon yaf such counseil
Toward his king, that was nought
heil,

Wherof to be the better lered
He thenketh to make him afered.

It fell so, that in thilké dawé¹
There was ordeigné by the lawe
A trompé with a sterné breth,
Which was clepéd the Trompe of
Deth.

And in the court where the king
was

A certein man this trompe of brass
Hath in kepíng and therof serveth,
That whanalord his dethdeserveth,
He shall this dredfull trompé blowe
To-fore his gate, and make it knowe
How that the jugément is yive
Of deth, which shall nought be
foryive.

The king whan it was night anone
This man assent² and bad him gone
To trompen at his brothers gate.
And he, which mot so done algate,
Goth forth and doth thekingéshest.
This lord, which herde of this
tempest

That he to-fore his gaté blewe,
Tho wist he by the lawe and knewe
That he was sekerliché dede.
And as of helpe he wist no rede,
But sendé for his frendés all
And tolde hem how it is befallé.
And they him axé causé why,
But he the sothé nought forthy
Ne wist, and there was sorwe tho.
For it stood thilké timé so,
This trompé was of such sentence,
That there ayein no resistéce
They couthe ordeiné by no weie,
That he ne mot algaté deie,
But if so that he may purcháce

¹ Dawe, day.

² Assent, sent to.

To get his legé lordés grace.
Here wittés therupon they caste
And ben appointed atté laste.
This lorde a worthy lady had
Unto his wife, whiche also drad
Her lordés deth, and children five
Betwene hem two they had alive,
That weren yonge and tender of age
And of statúre and of viságe
Right faire and lusty on to se.
Tho casten they, that he and she
Forth with their children on the
morwe,

As they that werc full of sorwe,
All naked but of smock and sheete
To tendre with the kingés herte
His gracé shulden go to seche
And pardon of the deth besече.
Thus passen they that wofull night,
And erly whan they sigh it light
They gone hem forth in suche a wise,
As thou to-fore hast herd divise,
All naked but here shertés on
They wepte and madé mochel
mone.

Here hair hangénd about here eres,
With sobbing and with sory teres
This lord goth than an humble pas
That whilom proud and noble was,
Wherof the cité sore a flight¹
Of hem that sawen thilké sight.
And nethéless all openly
With such weping and with such cry
Forth with his children and his wife.
He goth to praié for his life.
Unto the court whan they be come
And men therin have hedé nome,
There was no wight, if he hem sigh,
From water mighté kepe his eye
For sorwé which they maden tho.
The king supposeth² of this wo
And feigneth as he nought ne wiste,
But nethéles at his upriste

¹ A flight, was afflicted, grieved.

² Supposeth, makes believe.

Men tolden him, howe that it ferde.
And whan that he this wonder
herde,

In haast he goth into the halle.
And all at onés down they falle,
If any pité may be founde.
The king, which seeth hem go to
grounde,

Hath axéd hem what is the fere,
Why they be so dispuiled there.
His brother said: 'Ha, lord, mercy!

I wote none other causé why,
But only that this night full late
The trompe of deth was at my gate
In token that I shuldé deie;

Thus we be comé for to preie
That ye my worldés deth respite'

'Ha, fool, how thou art for to
wite,'¹

The kinge unto his brother saith,
'That thou art of so litel feith,
That only for a trompés soun
Hath gone dispuiled through the
town

Thou and thy wife in such manere
Forthwith thy children that ben here
In sight of allé men aboute.

For that thou saist, thou art in
doubte²

Of deth which standeth under the
lawe

Of man, and man it may withdrawe,
So that it may perchauncé faile,
Now shalt thou nought forthý mer-
veile,

That I down from my chare alight,
Whan I beheld to-fore my sight
In hem that were of so great age
Mín owné deth through here
ymáge,

Which God hath set by lawe of
kinde,

Wherof I may no boté³ finde.

For well I wot, suche as they be
Right suche am I in my degré,
Of flesshe and blood, and so shall
deie.

And thus though I that lawe obeie
Of which that kingés ben put under,
It ought ben well the lassé wonder
Than thou, which art withouté nede
For lawe of londe in suche a drede,
Which for to accompte is but a jape
As thing which thou might over-
scape.

Forthy, my brother, after this
I rede that sithen it so is
That thou canst drede a man so
sore,

Drede God with all thin herté more.
For all shall deie and all shall passe,
As well a leon as an asse,
As well a begger as a lorde,
Towardés dethe in one accorde
They shullen stonde.' And in this
wise

The kingé with his wordés wise
His brother taught and all foryive.
Forthý, my sone, if thou wolt live
In Vertue, thou must Vice escheue
And with lowe herte humblesse sue,
So that thou be nought surque-
dous."—

"My fader, I am amorous,
Wherof I woldé you besече
That ye me some ensample teche,
Which might in Lovés causé
stonde."—

"My soné, thou shalt under-
stonde

In Love and other thingés alle,
If that surquederié falle,
It may to him nought well betide
Which useth thilke Vice of Pride,
Which torneth wisdom to wening
And sothfastnesse into lesing
Through foll imaginatiön.
And for thin énformatiön,

¹ To wite, to blame.

² Doubt, fear.

³ Boté, remedy.

That thou this Vice as I thee rede
Escheué shalte, a tale I rede,
Which fell whilom by daiés olde,
So as the clerke Ovídē tolde.

There was whilom a lordés
sone,

Which of his Pride a nicé wone¹
Hath caught, that worthy to his
liche²

To sechen all the worldés riche
There was no woman for to love.
So high he set him selfe above
Of stature and of beauté bothe,
That him thought allé women lothe.
So was there no comparisón
As towarde his condition.
This yongé lord Narcizus hight.
No strength of Lové bowé might
His herté, whiche is unaffiled.³
But atté laste he was beguiled.
For of the goddés purveiaúnce
It felle him on a day perchaunce,
That he in all his proudé fare
Unto the forest gan to fare
Amonge othér, that theré were,
To huntén and disporte him there.
And whan he cam into the place,
Where that he woldé make his
chace,

The houndés weren in a throwe
Uncoupled and the hornés blowe,
The greté herte anone was founde
With swifté feet set on the grounde.
And he with spore in horsé side
Him hasteth fasté for to ride,
Till allé men be left behinde.
And as he rode under a linde
Beside a roche, as I thee telle,
He sigh where spronge a lusty
welle.

The day was wonder hote withalle,
And suche a thirst was on him
falle,

That he must outhér deie or drinke.
And downe he light and by the
brinke

He tide his hors unto a braunche
And laid him lowé for to staunche
His thirst. And as he cast his
loke

Into the welle and hedé toke,
He sigh the like of his viságe
And wendé there were an ymáge
Of suche a nimphe, as tho was say,¹
Wherof that love his herte assay
Began, as it was after sene
Of his sotie² and made him wene
It were a wogman, that he sigh.³
The more he cam the wellé nigh,
The neré cam she to him ayein,
So wist he never what to sain;
For whan he wepte he sigh her
wepe,

And whan he cried he toke good
kepe,

The samé worde she cried also;
And thus began the newé wo,
That whilom was to him sostraunge.
Tho made him Love an harde
eschaunge

To set his herte and to beginné
Thing whiche he might never winné.
And ever amonge he gan to loute,⁴
And praith that she to him come
oute.

And other while he goth afer
And other while he draweth ner
And ever he founde her in one place.
He wepeth, he crieth, he axeth
grace,

There as he mighté geté none.
So that ayein a roche of stone,
As he that knewe none other rede,
He smote him self til he was
dede.

¹ *Woe*, custom.

² *Liche*, body.

³ *Unaffiled*, attached to no one.

¹ *Tho was say*, then was seen.

² *Sotie*, folly.

³ *Sigh*, saw.

⁴ *Loute*, bow.

BOOK I.—PRIDE.

Wherof the nimphés of the welles
And other that there weren elles
Unto the wodés belongénde
The body, which was dede ligénde,
For puré pité that they have
Under gravé they begrave.¹
And than out of his sepulture
There spronge anone perávéntüre
Of flourés suche a wonder sight,
That men ensample také might
Upon the dedés whiche he dede,
And tho was sene in thilké stede,
For in the winter fressh and faire
The flourés ben, whiche is contraire
To kinde, and so was the folie
Which felle of his Surquederie.

"Thus he which Love had in
disdeigne,
Worst of all other was bescine,
And as he set his prise most hie,
He was lest worthy in Lovés eye
And most bejapéd in his wit,
Wherof the remembraunce is yit ;
So that thou might ensample take,
And eke all other, for his sake."—

"My fader, as touchénde of me
This Vice I thenké for to fle,
Whiche of his wening overthroweth
And namélich² of thing which
groweth

In Lovés cause or well or wo,
Yet prided I me never so.
But woldé God that gracé sende,
That toward me my lady wende
As I towardés hiré wene,
My lové shuldé so be sene
There shuldé go no Pride a place.
But I am fer fro thilké grace
And for to speke of timé nowé
So mote I suffre and praié you
That ye woll axe on other side,
If there be any point of Pride
Wherof it nedeth me to be
shrive."—

¹ *Begrave*, bury. ² *Namelich*, especially.

"My soné, God it thee foryive,
If thou have any thing misdo
Touchend of this, but evermo
Ther is another yet of Pride
Which couthé never his wordés
hide,

That he ne wold him selfe avaunt.
There may nothing his tungé daunt,
That he ne clappeth as a belle,
Wherof if thou wolt that I telle
It is behovely for to here,
So that thou might thy tungé stere
Toward the worlde and stonde in
grace,
Which lacketh ofte in many a place
To him that can nought sitté stille,
Whiche ellés shuld have all his
wille

Boasting.

The vice clepéd Avauntáncé¹
With Pride hath take his ácquein-
táncé,

So that his owné prise he lasseth
Whan he such mesure overpasseth,
That he his owné herald is.
That first was wel is thanné mis,
That was thankworthy is than
blame,

And thus the worship of his name
Through pride of his avauntarie
He torneth into vilenie.
I rede, how that this proudé Vice
Hath thilké wind in his office
Which through the blastés that he
bloweth

The mannés fame he overthroweth
Of vertue which shulde ellés
springe

Unto the worldés knoulechinge.
But he fordeth it all to sore,
And right of such a maner lore
There ben lovérs ; forthý if thou
Art one of hem, tell and say how,

Avauntáncé, vaunting, boasting.

Whan thou hast taken any thinge
Of lovés yefte or ouche¹ or ringe,
Or toke upon thee for the colde
Some goodly word that thee was
tolde

Of frendly chere or token or letter,
Wherof thin herté was the better,
Of that she sendé thee gretinge,
Hast thou for pride of thy likinge
Made thin avaunt where as thee
liste ?"—

"I woldé, fader, that ye wiste
My consciencé lith not here.
Yet had I never such matere,
Wherof min herté might amende.
Nought of so mochel as she sende
By mouth and saidé, 'grete him
wel.'"

And thus for that there is no dele
Wherof to maké min avaunt,
It is to reson accordaunt,
That I may never, but I lie,
Of lové make avauntarie.
Iwote nought what I shulde have do
If that I had encheson so
As ye have said here many one ;
But I found causé never none,
But Daunger which me welnigh
slough.

Therof I couthé telle inough
And of none other avauntaunce.
Thus nedeth me no repentaunce.
Now axeth further of my life,
For herof am I nought gultife."—

"My sone, I am wel paid withall,
For wite it wel in speciall,
That love of his verray justice
Above all other ayein this Vice
At allé timés most debateth
With all his hert and most it hateth.
And eke in allé maner wise
Avauntarie is to despise,
As by ensample thou might wite,
Whiche I finde in the bokés write.

Of hem that we Lombárdes now
calle

Albinus was the firste of alle
Which baré crowne of Lombardie,
And was of great chivalerie
In werre ayein divers kinges.
So felle it amonge other thinges
That he that time a werré had
With Gurmund which the Geptes
lad,¹

And was a mightie kinge also.
But nethéles it fell him so
Albinus slough him in the felde,
Ther halpe him nouthere spere ne
shelde, *

That he ne smote his heved of
thanne,

Wherof he toke away the panne,
Of whiche he saide he woldé make
A cuppé for Gurmundés sake
To kepe and drawe into memoire
Of his batailé the victoire.

And thus when he the felde had
wonne,

The londe anon was overronne
And seséd in his owné honde ;
Where he Gurmundés doughter
fonde,

Which maidé Rosemundé hight,
And was in every mannés sight
A fair, a fressh, a lusty one.
His herté fell to her anone,
And suche a love on her he cast,
That he her wedded atté last.
And after that long time in reste
With her he dwelleth, and to the
beste

They love eche other wonder wele.
But she that kepeth the blindé
whele,

Venus, when they be most above
In all the hottest of her love,
Her whele she torneth : and they
felle

¹ *Ouche*, jewel in its setting.

¹ *Lad*, led.

In the manér, as I shall telle,
This king which stood in all his
welth

Of pees, of worship and of helth,
And felt him on no sidé greved
As he that hath his worlde acheved,
Tho thought he wolde a festé make
And that was for his wivés sake,
That she the lordés atté feste,
That were obeisaunt to his heste,
May knowe. And so forth there
upon

He lette ordeigne and send anon
By letters and by messengers
And warnéd all his officers,
That every thing be well arraied,
The greaté stedés were assaied
For justinge and for tornement,
And many a perléd garnément
Embrouded was ayein the day.
The lordés in her beste array
Be comen at the timé set ;
One justeth well, an other bet,
And other whilé they torney ;
And thus they casten care away
And token lustés upon honde.
And after thou shalt understonde
To mete into the kingés halle
They comen, as they be bidden alle.
And whan they weré set and served
Than after, as it was deserved
To hem that worthy knightés were,
So as they setten here and there,
The prise was yove and spoken out
Among the heralds all about.
And thus benethe and eke above
All was of armés and of love,
Wherof abouten atté bordes
Men had many sondry wordes,
That of the mirthé which they made
The kinge him self began to glade
Within his hert and toke a Pride
And sigh the cuppé stonde aside,
Which made was of Gurmundés
hed,

As ye have herd, when he was ded,
And was with golde and riché stones
Beset and boundé for the nones,
And stode upon a fote on highte
Of burnéd golde, and with great
slighte

Of werkmenship it was begrave
Of such worke as it shuldé have
And was polisséd eke so clene
That no signe of the scull was sene
But as it were a gripés¹ eye.

The king bad bere his cuppe away
Which stood before him on the borde
And fetté thilke.² Upon his worde
The sculle is fette and wine ther-
inne,

Wherof he bad his wife beginne :
'Drink with thy fader, dame,' he
said.

And she to his bidding obeid
And toke the sculle, and whather list
She drank, as she which nothing wist
What cup it was. And than all out
The kinge in audiéce about
Hath tolde, it was her faders sculle,
So that the lordés knowé shulle
Of his bataile a soth witnésse,
And made avaunt through what
prowésse

He hath his wivés lové wonne,
Whiche of the sculle hath so be-
gonne.

Tho was there mochel pride alofte,
They spoken all, and she was softe,
Thenkend on thilke unkindé Pride,
Of that her lord, so nigh her side,
Avaunteth him that he hath slaine
And pikéd out her faders braine
And of the sculle had made a cuppe.
She suffreth all till they were uppe ;
And tho she hath sekenessé feigned
And goth to chambre and hath
compleigned

¹ *Gripes*, eagle's.

² *Fette thilke*, fetch that one.

Unto a maidé which she triste,¹
 So that none other wight it wiste.
 This maidé Glodeside is hote,
 To whom this lady hath behote²
 Of ladiship all that she can
 To vengen her upon this man,
 Which did her drink³ in suche a
 plite

Among hem allé for despite
 Of her and of her fader bothe,
 Wherof her thoughtés ben so
 wrothe,
 She saith, that she shall nought be
 glad,

Till that she se him so bestad
 That he no moré make avaunt,
 And thus they felle in covenaut,
 That they accorden atté laste
 With suché wilés as they caste,
 That they wol get of here accorde
 Some orpéd⁴ knight to sle this lorde.
 And with this sleighté they beginne,
 How they Helmegé mighten winne,
 Which was the kingés botéler,
 A proude and lusty bachiler,
 And Glodeside he loveth hote.
 And she to make him more assote⁵
 Her lové graunteth, and by nighte
 They shape how they to-gider
 mighte

A beddé mete. And done it was
 This samé night. And in this cas
 The quene her self the night
 seconde

Went in her stede and there she
 fonde

A chambre derké without light
 And goth to beddé to this knight.
 And he to kepe his observaunce
 To lové doth his obeisaunce
 And weneth it be Glodeside.
 And she than after lay a side

¹ *Triste*, trusted.

² *Behote*, promised.

³ *Did her drink*, caused her to drink.

⁴ *Orpéd*, bold.

⁵ *Assote*, to dote.

And axeth him what he hath do,
 And who she was she tolde him tho
 And said: 'Helmege, I am thy quene,
 Now shall thy lové well be sene
 Of that thou hast thy willé wrought;
 Or it shall soré ben aboutght,
 Or thou shalt worche, as I thee saie.
 And if thou wolt by suche a waie
 Do my plesaunce and holde it stille,
 For ever I shall ben at thy wille
 Bothe I and all min heritáge.'

Anone the wildé lovés rage,
 In which no man him can governe,
 Hath made him that he can nought
 werne,¹

But felle all hole to her assent,
 And thus the whele is all miswent,
 The which Fortune hath upon
 honde.

For how that ever it after stonde,
 They shope among hem such a wile
 The king was ded within a while.
 So slyly came it nought aboute,
 That they ne ben discovered out,
 So that it thought hem for the beste
 To fle, for theré was no reste.
 And thus the tresor of the kinge
 They trusse, and mochel other
 thinge,

And with a certaine felaship
 They fled and went away by ship
 And heldé her right cours from
 thenne

Till that they comen to Ravenne,
 Where they the dukés helpé sought.
 And he, so as they him besought,
 A placé graunteth for to dwelle.
 But after, whan he herdé telle
 Of the manér how they have do,
 The duke let shapé for hem so,
 That of a poison which they drunke
 They hadden that they have be-
 swunke.²

¹ *Werne*, refuse.

² *Beswunke*, laboured for.

And all this made Avaunt of Pride.
 Good is therfore a man to hide
 His owné prise, for if he speke,
 He may lightly his thanké breke.
 In armés lith none avauntáncé
 To him, which thenketh his name
 avaunce

And be renoméd of his dede,
 And also who that thenketh tospede
 Of Loye he may nought him avaunte.
 For what man thilké Vicé haunte,
 His purpose shall full ofté faile.
 In armés he that woll travaile
 Or ellés Lovés grace atteigne,
 His losé tunge he mōt restreigne,
 Whiche bereth of his honóur the
 keie.

“Forthy my sone, in alle waie
 Take right good hede of this
 matere.”—

“I thanké you, my fader dere,
 This scole is of a gentil lore.
 And if there be ought ellés more
 Of Pridé whiche I shall escheue,
 Nowe axeth forth, and I woll sue¹
 What thing, that ye me woll en-
 forme.”—

“My sone, yet in other forme
 There is a Vice of Pridés lore,
 Which like an hawk whan he will
 sore,

Fleeth up on high in his delíces
 After the likinge of his vices
 And woll no mannés reson knowe
 Till he down falle and overthrowe.
 This vicé Vaynglorie is hote,
 Wherof, my sone, I thee behote
 To trete and speke in suche a wise,
 That thou thee might better avise.

Vainglory.

The proudé Vice of Veinglorie
 Remembreth nought of purgatorie,

¹ Sue, follow.

His worldés joies ben so grete,
 Him thenketh of heven no beyete.¹
 This livés pompe is all his pees,
 Yet shall he deié nethéles,
 And therof thenketh he but a lite,²
 For all his lust is to delite
 In newé thingés, proude and veine,
 Als ferforth as he may atteine.
 I trowe, if that he mighté make
 His body newe, he woldé take
 A newé forme and leve his olde.
 For what thing that he may beholde
 The which to comun use is straunge,
 Anone his oldé guisé chaunge
 He woll, and fallé therupon
 Lich unto the camelión,
 Whiche upon every sondry hewe
 That he beholt he moté newe
 His colour; and thus unavised
 Ful ofté time he stant disguised.
 More jolif than the brid in Maie.
 He maketh him ever fressh and gaie
 And doth all his array disguise,
 So that of him the newé guise
 Of lusty folke all other take.
 And eke he can carollés make,
 Roundel, baláde and virélay.
 And with all this, if that he may
 Of lové gete him avauntage
 Anone he wext of his coráge
 So over glad, that of his ende
 He thenketh there is no deth
 coménde.

For he hath than at allé tide
 Of lové such a maner Pride,
 Him thenketh his joy is endéles.

“Now shrive thee, sone, in
 Goddés pees

And of thy lové tell me plein,
 If that thy glorie hath be so
 vayne.”—

“My fader, as touchénd of all
 I may nought well ne nought ne
 shall

¹ Beyete, gain. ² Lite, little.

Of vayn glorie excusé me,
 That I ne have for lové be
 The better addresséd and arraiéd.
 And also I have ofte assaiéd
 Roundel, baláde and virélay
 For her on whom min herté lay,
 To make and also for to peinte
 Carollés with my wordés queinte
 To setté my purpós alofte.
 And thus I sang hem forth full ofte
 In halle and eke in chambre aboute
 And madé merie among the route :
 But yet ne ferde I nought the bet.
 Thus was my glorie in vayn beset
 Of all the joié that I made.
 For when I woldé with her glade
 And of her lové songes make,
 She saide, it was nought for her
 sake,
 And listé nought fny songés here,
 Ne witen what the wordés were.
 So for to speke of min array
 Yet couth I never be so gay
 Ne so well make a songe of love,
 Wherof I mighté ben above
 And have enchésón¹ to be glad.
 But rather I am ofte adrad
 For sorwé, that she saith me nay.
 And nethéles I woll nought say,
 That I nam glad on other side
 For famé that can nothing hide.
 All day woll bringe unto min ere
 Of that men speken here and there,
 How that my lady berth the prise,
 How she is faire, how she is wise,
 How she is womanlich of chere.
 Of all this thing whan I may here,
 What wonder is though I be fain.
 And eke whan I may heré sain
 Tidíngés of my ladis hele,
 All though I may nought with her
 dele,
 Yet am I wonder glad of that.
 For whan I wote her good estate,

¹ *Encheson*, occasion.

As for that time I dare well swere,
 None other sorwé may me dere.
 Thus am I gladed in this wise.
 But, fader, of your lorés wise,
 Of whiché ye be fully taught,
 Now tell me if ye thenketh ought,
 That I therof am for to wite."¹
 "Of that there is, I thee acquite,
 My sone," he saide, "and for thy
 good

I wollé that thou understood,
 For I thenke upon this matere
 To tell a tale, as thou shalt here,
 How that ayein this proudé Vice
 The highé God of his justice
 Is wrothe and great vengeaúncé
 doth.

Nowe herken a talé, that is soth.
 Though it be nought of Lovés
 kinde.

A great ensample thou shalt finde
 This Veinglorié for to fle,
 Whiche is so full of vanité.

There was a king, that mochel
 might,

Which Nabugodonosor hight,
 Of whom that I spake here to-fore.
 Yet in the bible this namé is bore,
 For all the worlde in thorient
 Was hole at his commaúndément,
 As than of kingés to his liche
 Was none so mighty ne so riche,
 To his empire and to his lawes
 As who saith all in thilké dawes
 Were obeisaúnt and tribute bere,
 As though he god of erthé were.
 With strengthe he putté kingés
 under

And wrought of Pridé many a
 wonder,

He was so full of Veinglorie,
 That he ne hadde no memorie,
 That there was any God but he
 For pride of his prosperite.

¹ *To wite*, to blame.

Till that the highé King of Kinges,
Which seeth and knoweth allé
thingés,

Whose eyé may nothíngé asterte
The priveté of mannés herte,¹
They speke and sounen in his ere
As though they loudé windés were,
He toké vengeaunce of his Pride.
But for he wolde a while abide
To loke if he wolde him amende,
To him aforé token he sende.

And that was in his slepe by night
This proudé kinge a wonder sight
Had in his sweven² there he lay.
Him thought upon a mery day,
As he beheld the world aboute,
A tre full growe he sigh³ there oute
Which stood the world amidde^s
even,

Whos heighté straught up to the
heven.

The levés weren faire and large,
Of fruit it bore so ripe a charge,
That allé men it mighté fede.
He sigh also the bowés sprede
Above all erth, in whiché were
The kinde of allé briddes there.
And eke him thought he sigh also
The kinde of alle bestés go
Under the tre abouten round
And fedden hem upon the ground.
As he this wonder stood and sigh,
Him thought he herdea vois on high
Criende, and saide aboven alle :
'Hewe down this tree and let it falle,
The levés let defoule in haste
And do the fruit destruie and wáste;
And let ofshreden every braunche,
But atté roote be let it staunche.
Whan all his Pride is cast to
grounde

The rooté shall be fasté bounde ;

¹ From whose eye the secrets of man's heart
may in no wise escape.

² *Sweven*, dream.

³ *Sigh*, saw.

And shall no mannés herté bere,
But every lust he shall forbere
Of man, and lich an oxe his mete
Of gras he shall purcháce and ete,
Till al the waters of the heven
Have wasshen him by timés seven,
So that he be through-knowe
aright

What is the hevenlicke⁴ might,
And be made humble to the wille
Of Him which may all save and
spille.⁵

This king out of his sweven ab-
raide¹

And he upon the morwe it saide
Unto the clerkés which he hadde.
But none of hem the soth aradde,
Was none his sweven couth undo.
And it stood thilké timé so,
This kinge had in subjection
Judec and of affection
Above al other one Daniél
He loveth, for he couthé well
Diviné that none other couthe.
To him were allé thingés couthe,
As he it hadde of Goddes grace.
He was before the kingés face
Assent and bodé² that he shulde
Upon the point the kinge of tolde³
The fortune of his sweven ex-
pounde,

As it shulde afterward be founde.
Whan Daniél this sweven herde,
He stood long time, er he answerde,
And made a wonder hevvy chere.⁴
The king toke hede of his manere
And bad him tellé that he wiste
As he to whome he mochel triste,⁵
And said, he woldé nought be
wroth.

But Daniél was wonder loth

¹ Awoke suddenly from his dream.

² Sent for and commanded.

³ *Of tolde*, told of.

⁴ *Hevvy chere*, sad face.

⁵ *Triste*, trusted.

And said : ' Upon thy fomen alle,
Sir king, thy sweven moté falle.
And nethéles touchend of this
I woll thee tellen howe it is,
'And what disese is to thee shape,
God wote if thou it shall escape.
The highé tre which thou hast sein,
With lef and fruit so wel besein,
The which^{*} stood in the world
amiddes,

So that the bestés and the briddes
Govérnéd were of him alone,
Sir King, betokeneth thy persóné
Which stonde above all erthely
thinges.

Thus regnen under thee the kinges
And all the people unto thee louteth¹
And all the worldé thy person
douteth,²

So that with vein honoúr deceived
Thou hast the reverencé weived³
Fro him whiche is thy kinge above,
That thou for dredé ne for love
Wolt nothing knowen of this God.
Which now for thee hath made a
rod,

Thy Vaynglorie and thy folie
With greté painés to chastie.
And of the vois thou herdest speke,
Which bad the bowés for to breke
And hewe and fellé down the tre,
That word belongeth unto thee.
Thy regné shall be overthrowe,
And thou despuiléd for a throwe⁴
But that the roote shuldé stonde,
By that thou shalt wel understonde,
There shall abiden of thy regne
A time ayein whan thou shall regne.
And eke of that thou herdest saie
To take a mannés hert aweie
And setté there a bestiáll,
So that he lich an oxé shall

¹ *Louteth*, bows.

² *Douteth*, fears.

³ *Weived*, put aside.

⁴ *Throwe*, space of time.

Pastúre, and that he be bereined
By timés seven and soré peined,
Till that he knowe his Goddes
mightes,

Than shall he stonde ayein uprightes.
All this betokeneth thine estate,
Which now with God is in debate :
Thy mannés formé shall be lassed,
Till seven yere ben overpassed,
And in the likenesse of a beste
Of gras shall be thy roiall feste,
The weder shall upon thee rayne.
And understonde, that all this payne
Which thou shalt suffre thilké tide,
Is shape all only for thy Pride
Of Vaynglorie and of the sinne
Which thou hast longé stonden inne.
So upon this condición

Thy sweven hath exposición.
But er this thing befallé in dede,
Amendé thee, this wold I rede,
Yif and departé¹ thin almésse,
Do mercy forth with rightwisnéssé,
Beseche and praie the highé grace,
For so thou might thy pees pur-
cháce

With God and stonde in good ac-
corde.²

But Pride is loth to leve his lorde
And wol nought suffre Humilité
With him to stonde in no degré.
And whan a ship hath lost his stere,
Is none so wise that may him stere
Ayein the wawés in a rage.
This proudé king in his coráge
Humilité hath so forlore,
That for no sweven he sigh to-fore
Ne yet for all that Daniél
Him hath counséléd every dele,
He let it passe out of his minde
Through Vaynglorie, and as the
blinde

He seth no weie er him be wo.
And fel withinne a timé so,

¹ *De parte*, divide, distribute.

As he in Babiloiné wente,
 The Vanité of Pride him hente.¹
 His hert aros of vayn glorie,
 So that he drough to memorie
 His lordship and his regalie
 With wordés of surquederie.
 And whan that he him most avaun-
 teth,
 That Lord, which Vaynglorié daun-
 teth,
 All sodeinlich, as who saith treis,²
 Where that he stood in his paleis
 He toke him fro the mennés sight.
 Was none of hem so ware that might
 Set eyé where that he becom.
 And thus was he from his kingdóm
 Into the wildé forest drawe,
 Where that the mighty Goddés lawe
 Through his powér did him trans-
 forme
 Fro man into a bestés forme.
 And lich an oxe under the fote
 He graseth as he nedés mote
 To geten him his livés fode.
 Tho thought him coldé grasses
 goode,
 That whilome ete the hoté spices,
 Thus was he tornéd fro delices.
 The wine which he was wont to
 drinke,
 He toke than of the wellés brinke
 Or of the pit or of the slough,
 It thought him thanné good inough.
 In stede of chambres well arraied
 He was than of a bussh well paid;
 The hardé ground he lay upon,
 For other pilwés had he non,
 The stormés and the reinés fall,
 The windés blowe upon him all,
 He was tormented day and night.
 Such was the highé Goddes might,
 Till seven yere an endé toke.
 Upon him self tho gan he loke :

In stede of meté gras and streis ;
 In stede of handés longé cleis ;¹
 In stede of man a bestés like ;²
 He sigh,³ and than he gan to sike⁴
 For cloth of golde and of perrie.⁵
 Which him was wont to magnifie.
 When he beheld his cote of heres
 He wepte and with full wofull teres
 Up to the heven he caste his chere⁶
 Wepénd and thought in this manere ;
 Though he no wordés mighté winne,
 Thus said his hert and spake
 withinne :
 ' O mighty God, that al⁷ hast
 wrought
 And all might bring ayein to
 nought,
 Now knowe I wel but all of thee
 This world hath no prosperité,
 In thin aspect ben alle aliche
 The pouer man and eke the riche,
 Withouté thee there may no wight,
 And thou above all other might.
 O mighty Lord, toward my vice
 Thy mercy medle⁷ with justice,
 And I woll make a covenant
 That of my life the remenaunt
 I shall it by thy grace amende
 And in thy lawé so dispende,
 That Vaynglorie I shall escheue,
 And bowe unto thin heste, and sue
 Humnilité, and that I vowe.'⁸
 And so thenkend he gan down
 bowe,
 And though him lacké vois of
 speche,
 He gan up with his fete areche
 And wailend in his bestly steven⁸
 He made his plaint unto the heven.
 He kneleth in his wise and braieth
 To seché mercy and assaieth

¹ *Hente*, seized.² *As who saith treis*, in a trice.³ *Chris*, claws.⁴ *Sigh*, saw.⁵ *Perrie*, precious stones.⁶ *Chere*, countenance.⁷ *Medle*, mix, join.² *Like*, body.⁴ *Sike*, sigh.⁸ *Steven*, voice.

His God, which made him nothing
straunge.¹

Whan that he sigh his Pridé
chaunge

Anone as he was humble and tame
He found toward his God the same,

And in a twinkeling of a loke
His mannés forme ayein he toke
And was réforméd to the regne
In whiche that he was wont to
regne,

So that the Pride of Vaynglorie
Ever after out of memorie
He lett it passe. And thus is
shewed

What is to ben of Pride unthewed²
Ayein the highé Goddés lawe,
To whom no man may be feláwe.

"Forthy my sone, také good
hede

So for to ledé thy manhede,
That thou ne be nought lich a beste.
But if thy life shall ben honéste
Thou must Humblessé take on
honde,

For thanné might thou siker stonde,
And for to speke it other wise
A proud man can no love assise.³
For though a woman wolde him
plese,

His Pridé can nought ben at ese.
There may no man to mochel blame
A Vicé which is for to blame.

Forthy men shulden nothing hide
That mighte fall in blame of Pride,
Whiche is the worsté Vice of alle,
Wherof so as it was befallé
The tale I thanke of a cronique
To telle, if that it may thee like,
So that thou might Humblessé sue
And eke the Vice of Pride escheue,

¹ Showed himself no whit estranged—did not turn from him.

² Unthewed, showing want of discipline against the law of the high God to whom, &c.

³ Assise, be in session with.

Wherof the glorie is false and
vaine,

Which God him self hath in
disdeine,

That though it mounté for a throwe,¹
It shall down falle and overthrowe.

A king whilom was yonge and
wise,

The which set of his wit great prise.
Of depe ymaginátions
And straunge interpretatíons,
Problemés and demandés eke
His wisdom was to finde and seke,
Wherof he wolde in sondry wise
Opposen hem that weren wise.
But none of hem it mighté bere
Upon his word to yive answeére
Out taken² one, which was a
knight,

To him was every thing so light,
That al so sone as he hem herde
The kingés wordés he answerde,
What thing the king him axewolde,
Whereof anone the trouth he tolde.
The king somdele had an envie
And thought he wolde his wittés
plie

To seté some conclusión,
Which shuldé be confusiún
Unto this knight, so that the name
And of wisdóm the highé fame
Toward him selfe he woldé winne.
And thus of all his wit withinne
This king began to studie and muse
What straungé mater he might use
The knightés wittés to confounde,
And atté last he hath it founde:
And for the knight anon he sente,
That he shall tellé what he mente.
Upon three points stood the matere
Of questíons as thou shalte here.

"The firsté point of allé thre
Was this: 'What thing in his degré

¹ Throwe, space of time.

² Out taken, except.

Of all this world hath nedé lest *
And yet men helpe it allthermost.¹

The seconde is : 'What moste
is worth

And of costage is lest put forth.'

The thrid is : 'Which is of most
cost

And lest is worth and goth to lost.'
The king these thre demaundés
axeth,

To the knight this law he taxeth,
That he shall gone and comen ayein
Thethriddé weke and tell him pleine
To every point, what it amounteth.
And if so be that he miscounteth
To make in his answere a faile,
There shall none other thinge
availe,

The king saith, but he shall be dede
And lese his goodés and his hede.
This knight was sory of this thinge
And wolde excuse him to the kinge;
But he ne wolde him nought forbere,
And thus the knight of his answer
Goth home to take avisément.
But after his entendément
The more he cast his wit aboute,
The more he stant therof in doubte.
Tho wist he well the kingés herte,
That he the deth ne shulde asterte²
And suche a sorwe to him hath take,
That gladship he hath all forsake.
He thoughté first upon his life,
And after that upon his wife,
Upon his children eke also,
Of whiché he had doughteres two.
The yongest of hem had of age
Fourtené yere, and of visage
She was right faire and of stature
Lich to an hevenlich figure,
And of manér and goodly speche;
Though men wolde allé londés
seche,

They shulden nought have founde
her like.

She sigh her fader sorwe and sike
And wisté nought the causé why.
So cam she to him prively
And that was, wher he made his
mone

Within a gardin all him one.¹
Upon her knees she gan down falle
With humble herte and to him calle
And saide : 'O goodé fader dere,
Why maké ye thus levy chere
And I wot nothinge how it is?
And well ye knowé, fader, this,
What aventuré that you felle
Ye might it sauflý to me telle,
For I have ofté herd you saide,
That ye such truste have on me
laide,

That to my suster ne to my brother
In all this worlde ne to none other
Ye dursté telle a priveté
So well, my fader, as to me.
Forthý,² my fader, I you praie
Ne casteth nought that bert awaie,
For I am she, that woldé kepe
Your honour.' And with that to
wepe

Her eyé may nought be forbore,
She wissbeth for to ben unbore,
Er that her fader so mistriste
To tellen her of that he wiste.
And ever among 'Mercý' she cride,
That he ne shulde his counsel
hide

From hiré, that so wolde him good
And was so nigh in flesshe and
blood.

So that, with weping, atté laste
His chere³ upon his childe he caste
And sorwefullý to that she praide
He tolde his tale and thus he saide :

¹ *Allthermost*, most of all.

² *Asterter*, escape from.

¹ *All him one*, by him-self alone.

² *Forthý*, therefore.

³ *Chere*, countenance.

'The sorwe, doughter, which I
make

Is nought all only for my sake,
But for thee bothe and for you alle,
For suche a chaunce is me befallē,
That I shall er this thriddē day
Lese¹ all that ever I lese may,
My life and all my good therto.
Therefore it is I sorwe so.'

'What is the cause, alas,' quod
she,

'My fader, that ye shulden be
Dedeand destrued in suche a wise?'
And he began the points devise,²
Which as the king tolde him by
mouthe

And said her pleinly, that he couthe
Answéren to no point of this.

And she, that hereth howe it is,
Her counseil yaf and saidé tho :³

'My fader, sithen⁴ it is so,
That ye can se none other weie,
But that ye must nedés deie,
I woldé pray you of o thinge,—
Let me go with you to the kinge,
And ye shall make him under-
stonde,

How ye, my wittés for to fonde,⁵
Have laid your answer upon me,
And telleth him in such degré
Upon my worde ye wol abide
To life or deth what so betide.
For yet perchaunce I may purcháce
With some good word the kingés
grace,

Your life and eke your good to save.
For ofté shall a woman have
Thing whiche a man may nought
areche.⁶

Thefader herd his daughters speche
And thought there was no reson in,
And sigh his owné life to winne

He couthe done him self no cure.
So better him thought in aventure
To put his life and all his good,
Than in the maner as it stood
His life incertein for to lese.
And thus thenkénd he gan to chese¹
To do the counseil of his maid
And toke the purpose, which she
said.

The day was comen and forth they
gon,

Unto the court they come anon.
Where as the kinge in his jugement
Wasset, and hath this knight assent.
Arraied in her besté wise

This maiden with her wordés wise
Her fader leddé by the honde
Into the placé, where he fonde
The king with other which he wolde,
And to the king knelénd he tolde
As he enforméd was to-fore,
And praith the king, that he ther-
fore

His daughters wordés woldé take,
And saith that he woll undertake
Upon her wordés for to stonde.
Tho was ther great merveile on
honde,

That he, which was so wise a knight,
His life upon so yonge a wight
Besetté wolde in jeopartie,
And many it helden for folie.
But at the lasté nethéles
The king commaundeth ben in
pees,

And to this maide he cast his chere
And saidé, he wolde her talé here,
And bad her speke, and she began :
'My legé lord, so as I can,'

Quod she, 'the pointés which I
herde,

They shull of reson ben answerde.
The first I understonde is this,
What thinge of all the worlde it is,

¹ Lese, lose.

² Devise, relate.

³ Tho, then.

⁴ Sithen, since.

⁵ Fonde, try.

⁶ Areche, reach to.

¹ Chese, choose.

Which men most helpe and hath
lest nede.

My legé lord, this wolde I rede
The erthe it is, whiche evermo
With mannés labour is bego
As well in Winter as in Maie.
The mannés honde doth what he
may

To helpe it forth and make it riche,
And forthý men it delve and diche
And eren¹ it with strength of
plough,

Wher it hath of him self inough
So that his nede is atté leste.
For every man and birde and beste
Of flour and gras and roote and
rinde

And every thing by way of kinde
Shall sterve,² and erthe it shall be-
come;

As it was out of erthé nome
It shall to therthé torne ayein.
And thus I may by reson sein
That erthe is mosté nedéles
And most men helpe it nethéles,
So that, my lord, touchénd of this
I have answerde how that is.

‘That other point I understood,
Which most is worth and most is
good

And costeth lest a man to kepe,
My lorde, if ye woll také kepe,
I say it is Humilité,
Through whích the high Trinite
As for deserte of puré Love
Unto Marié from above
Of that he knewe her humble entente
His owné sone adown he sente,
Above all other and³ her he chese
For that vertu which bodeth pees.
So that I may by reson calle
Humilité most worthe of alle,

¹ *Eren*, till.

² *Sterve*, die.

³ And he chose her above all other. “And”
used in the middle of a clause, as we might
now use “also.”

And lest it costeth to mainteine
In all the worlde, as it is seine.
For who that hath humblesse on
honde

He bringeth no werrés into londe,
For he desireth for the best
To setten every man in reste.
Thus with your highé reverence
Me thenketh that this evidence
As to this point is suffisaínt.

‘And touchend of the reme-
naúnt,
Whiche is the thridde of your
axinges,

What lest is worth of allé thinges
And costeth most, I telle it Pride,
Which may nought in the Heven
abide.

For Lucifer with hem that felle
Bar Pridé with him into helle.
There was Pride of to grete cost,
Whan he for Pride hath Heven
lost;

And after that in paradise
Adam for Pridé lost his prise
In middel-erth. And eke also
Pride is the cause of allé wo,
That all the world ne may suffise
To staunche of Pridé the reprise.¹
Pride is the hevéd² of all sinne,
Which wasteth all and may nought
winne.

Pride is of every mis³ the pricke,
Pride is the worsté of allé wicke,
And costeth most and lest is worth
In placé where he hath his forth.

‘That have I said that I woll
say

Of min answére and to you pray,
My legé lorde, of your office,
That yesuch grace and suche justice
Ordeigné for my fader here,
That after this whan men it here,

¹ *Reprise*, reproach.

² *Hevél*, head.

³ *Mis*, thing amiss; wrong.

The world therof may speké good.'

The king, which reson understood

And hath all herde how she hath said,

Was inly glad and so well paid,
That all his wrath is over go.

And he began to loké tho
Upon this maiden in the face,

In which he found so mochel grace,
That all his prise on her he laide

In audiéce and thus he saide:

'My fairé maidé, well thee be
Of thin answére, and eke of thee

Me liketh well, and as thou wilt
Foryivé be thy faders gilte.

And if thou were of such lignáge,
That thou to me were of paráge

And that thy fader were a pere,
As he is now a bachelére,

So siker as I have a life,
Thou sholdest thanné be my wife.

But this I saie nethéles,
That I woll shapé thin encrese,

What worldés good that thou wolt
crave

Are of my yift, and thou shalt have.'

And she the king with wordés
wise

Knelendé thonketh in this wise:

'My legé lord, god mot you quite.¹
My fader here hath but a lite

Of warison,² and that he wende
Had all be lost, but now amende

He may well through your noble
grace.'

With that the king right in his
place

Anon forth in that fressshé hete
An erldome, which than of eschete

Was laté falle into his honde,
Unto this knight, with rent and

londe,

Hath yove and with his chartre
sesed.¹

And thus was all the noise appesed.
This maiden, which sate on her

knees

To fore the kingés charitees,
Commendeth and saith evermore:

'My legé lord, right now to-fore
Ye saide, and it is of recorde,

That if my fader were a lorde
And pere unto these other grete,

Ye wolden for nought ellés lette,
That I ne sholdé be your wife.

And thus wote every worthy life
A kingés worde mot nede be holde.

Forthy my lord, if that ye wolde
So great a charité fulfille,

God wote it weré well my wille.
For he, which was a bachelere,

My fader, is now made a pere;
So whan as ever that I cam,

An erlés doughter nowé I am.'

"This yongé king, which peiséd

all

Her beauté and her wit withall,
As he which was with lové hente,

Anone therto yaf his assente.
He mighté nought the place asterte

That she nis lady of his herte.
So that he toke her to his wife

To holdé while that he hath life.
And thus the king toward his

knight

Accordeth him as it is right.
And over this, good is to wite²

In the cronique as it is write
This noble kingé, of whom I tolde,

Of Spainé by tho daies olde
The kingdom had in governaunce,

And as the boke maketh remem-
braunce

Alphonsé was his propre name.
The knight also, if I shall name,

¹ *Quitte, requite.*

² Little of reward for service done.

¹ *Sesed, "seisin" (possession), given.*

² *To wite, to know.*

Danz Petro hight, and as men telle
 His doughter wisé Pétronelle
 Was clepéd, which was full of grace.
 And that was sene in thilké place,
 Where she her fader out of tene¹
 Hath brought, and made her selfe
 a quene,

Of that she hath so well desclosed
 The points wherof she was opposed.

“Lo now, my sone, as thou might
 here,

Of all this thing to my matere
 But one I take, and that is Pride,
 To whom no gracé may betide.
 In Heven he fell out of his stede,
 And Paradise him was forbode;
 The goodé men in erthe him hate,
 So that to helle he mote algate,
 Whereevery Vertueshall beweived²
 And every Vicé be resceived.
 But Humblesse is all other wise,
 Which most is worth, and no re-
 prise³

It taketh ayein, but softe and faire
 If any thing stant in contraire
 With humble speche it is redressed.
 Thus was this yongé maiden blessed,
 The whiche I spake of now to-fore,
 Her faders life she gat therfore

¹ *Tene*, anxious grief.

² *Weived*, put aside.

³ *Reprise*, reproach.

And wan withall the kingés love.
 Forthý my sone, if thou wolt love,
 It sit thee well to levé Pride
 And taken Humblesse on thy side,
 The more of gracé thou shalt
 gete.”—

“My fader, I woll nought foryete
 Of this that ye have told me here,
 And if that any such manere
 Of humble port may love appaie,
 Here afterwarde I thonke assaie.
 But now forth over I’ beseche,
 That ye more of my shrifté
 seche.”—

“My godé sone, it shall be do.
 Now herken and lay an eré to,
 For as touchénd of Pridés fare
 Als ferforth as I can declare
 In cause of Vice, in cause of Love
 That hast thou plainly herde above,
 So that there is no more to saie
 Touchénd of that; but other waie
 Touchend Envie I thenké telle,
 Whiche hath the propre kinde of
 helle,¹

Withouté causé to misdo
 Toward him self and other also;
 Hereafterward as understonde
 Thou shalt the spieces,² as they
 stonde.

¹ Which hath from hell its proper nature.

² Species, classification into its several kinds.

Book III.

OF ENVY.

Now after Pridé the secoúnde
There is, which many a
wofull stounde,
Towardés other berth aboute
Within him self and nought with-
oute.

For in his thought he brenneth ever,
Whan that he wote an other lever¹
Or moré vertuós than he,
Which passeth him in his degré;
Therof he taketh his maladie.
That Vice is clepéd hot Envie.
Forthy, my sone, if it be so,
Thou art or hast ben one of tho,²
As for to speke in Lovés cas
If ever yet thin herté was
Seke of another mannes hele? "—

"So god avauncé my quaréle,
My fader, ye⁴ a thousand sithe.
Whan I have sene another blithe
Of love and hadde a goodly chere,
Ethna, which brenneth yere by yere,
Was thanné nought so hote as I
Of thilké sore which privly
Mine hertés thought withinné bren-
neth.

The ship, which on the wawes
renneth

And is forstorméd and forblowe,⁵

Is nought more peined for a throwe¹
Than I am thanné whan I se
Another which that passeth me
In that fortune of Lovés yifte.
But fader, this I telle in shrifte,
That is no where but in o place.
For who that lese or findé grace
In other stede, it may nought greve.
But this ye may right well beleve,
Toward my lady that I serve,
Though that I wisté for to sterve,
Min hert is full of such folý,
That I my selfe may nought chasty,
Whan I the Court se of Cupidé
Approche unto my lady side
Of hem that lusty ben and fresshe,
Though it availe hem nought a
resshe,²

But only that they ben of speche,
My sorwe is than nought to seche.
But whan they rounen³ in her ere,
Than groweth all my mosté fere.
And namely⁴ whan they talen
longe,

My sorwes thanné be so stronge,
Of that I see hem well at ese
I can nought tellé my disese.
But, sire, as of my lady selve,
Though she have wowers, ten or
twelve,

¹ *Lever*, more beloved.

² *Tho*, those.

³ Sick of another man's health.

⁴ *I'e*, yea.

⁵ "For" is an intensive prefix.

¹ *Throwe*, space of time.

² *Resshe*, rush.

³ *Rounen*, whisper.

⁴ *Namely*, especially.

For no mistrust I have of her
 Me grevêth nought, for certés, sir,
 I trowe in all this world to seche
 Nis woman, that in dede and
 speche

Woll better avise her what she
 doth,

Ne better, for to saie a sothe,
 Kepe her honour at allé tide
 And yet get her a thank beside.

But nethéles I am beknowe,
 That whan I se at any throwe¹

Or elles if I may it here,
 That she make any man good
 chere,

Though I therof have nought to
 done,

My thought woll entermete² him
 sone.

For though I be my selven straunge
 Envié maketh min herté chaunge,
 That I am sorwefully bestad
 Of that I se another glad
 With hiré, but of other all
 Of Lové what so may befall,
 Or that he faile or that he spede,
 Therof take I but litel hede.

Nowe have I said, my fader, all,
 As of this point in speciall
 As ferforthly as I have wiste.³
 Nowaxeth, fader, what you liste.”—

“My sone, ere I axe any more
 I thenké somdele for thy lore
 Tell an ensamble of this matére
 Touchend Envy, as thou shalt here.

“Write in Civilé this I finde,
 Though it be nought the houndés
 kinde

To eté chaff, yet woll he werne
 An oxe, which cometh to the berne,
 Therof to taken any fode.

And thus who that it understode

It stant of Love in many a place,
 Who that is out of Lovés grace
 And may him selven nought availe,
 He wold an other sholdé faile.

And if he may put any lette,
 He doth al that he may to lette.
 Wherof I finde, as thou shalt wit,
 To this purpós a talé write.

“There ben of suché mo than
 twelve,

That ben nought able as of hem
 selve

To getté love, and for Envie
 Upon all other they aspie.

And for¹ hem lacketh that they
 wolde,

They kepé that none other sholde
 Touchend of love his causé spede;

Wherof a great ensample I rede,
 Whiche unto this matére accordeth,

As Ovide in his boke recordeth,
 How Poliphemus whilom wrought,

Whan that he Galathé besought
 Of lové, whiche he may nought
 lacche,²

That made him for to waite and
 wacche

By allé waiés howe it ferde;
 Till at the last he knewe and herde

How that an other haddé leve
 To lové there, as he mot leve

As for to speke of any spede;
 So that he knew none other rede

But for to waiten upon alle
 Till he may se the chauncé falle,

That he her lové mighté greve,
 Whiche he him self may nought
 acheve.

This Galathé, saith the poëte,
 Above all other was unmete³

Of beauté, that men thanné knewe,
 And had a lusty love, and trewe

¹ *Throwe*, space of time.

² *Entermete*, go apart from.

³ As far forth as I have known.

¹ *For*, because.

² *Lacche*, catch, secure.

³ *Unmete*, beyond measure.

A bachelor in his degré,
 Right such an other as was she;
 On whom she hath her herté set,
 So that it mighté nought be let¹
 For yifté ne for no behesté,
 That she ne was all at his heste.²
 This yongé knight Acís was hote,³
 Whiche her ayeinwarde also hote⁴
 All only loveth and no mo.⁵
 Herof was Poliphemus wo
 Through pure Envie and ever aspide
 And waiteth⁶ upon every side,
 Whan he to-gider mighté se
 This yonge Acís with Galathé.
 So longe he waiteth to and fro,
 Till at the laste he founde hem two
 In privé placé, where they stood
 To speke and have her wordés good.
 The placé, where as he hem sigh,⁷
 It was under a banké nigh
 The greaté se, and he above
 Stood and behelde the lusty love,
 Whiche eche of hem to other made
 With goodly chere and wordés glade
 That all his hert hath sette a fire
 Of pure Envie. And as a vire⁸
 Which flieth out of a mighty bowe,
 Away he fledde for a throwe,⁹
 As he that was for lové wode,
 Whan that he sigh how that it
 stode.

This Polipheme a geaunt was,
 And whan he sigh the sothé cas,
 How Galathé him hath forsake
 And Acís to her lové take,
 His herté may it nought forbere
 That he ne roreth as a bere
 And as it were a wildé beast
 In whom no reson might areste.
 He ranne Ethná the hill about,
 Where never yet the fire was out,

¹ Let, hindered.² Heste, command.³ Hote, named.⁴ Hote, hotly.⁵ No mo, no more, no one else.⁶ Waiteth, watcheth.⁷ Sigh, saw.⁸ Vire, arrow.⁹ Throwe, space of time.

Fulfilled of sorwe and great disese
 That he sigh Acís well at ese.
 Till atté last he him bethoughte
 As he which all Envié soughte,
 And torneth to the banke ayein
 Where he with Galathé hath sein
 That Acís, whom he thoughté
 greve,
 Though he him self may nought
 releve.

This geaunt with his rudé might
 Part of the banke he shof down
 right,

The whiche even upon Acís fille,¹
 So that with falling of this hille
 This Poliphemus Acís slough,
 Wherof she madé sorwe inough.
 And as she fledde from the londe,
 Neptúnus toke her by the honde
 And kept her in so faste a place
 Fro Polipheme and his manáce,
 That he with al his false Envie
 Ne might atteigne her compaignie.
 This Galathé, of whom I speke,
 That of her self may nought be
 wreke,²

Withouten any semblaunt feigned
 She hath her lovés deth com-
 pleigned,

And with her sorwe and with her
 wo

She hath the goddés moved so,
 That they of pité and of grace
 Have Acís in the samé place,
 There he lay dede, into a welle
 Transforméd, as the bokes telle,
 With fresshé stremés and with clere,
 As he whilom with lusty chere
 Was fressh his lové for to queme.³
 And with this rudé Polipheme
 For his Envie and for his hate
 They weré wroth. And thus
 algate,

¹ Fille, fell.² Wreke, avenged.³ Queme, please.

"My soné, thou might under-
stonde,
That if thou wolt in gracie stonde
With Lové, thou must leve Envie:
And as thou wolt for thy partie
Toward thy lové stonde fre
So must thou suffre another be,
What so befallé upon thy chaunce.
For it is an unwise vengeaunce
Which to none other man is lefe
And is unto him selvé grefe."¹—

"My fader, this ensample is
good,
But how so ever that it stood
With Poliphemus love, as tho,"²
It shall nought stonde with me so
To worchen any felonie
In lové for no suche envie.
Forthy if there ought ellés be,
Now axeth forth, in what degreé
It is, and I me shall confesse
With shrifte unto your holinesse.

"My godé soné, yet there is
A Vicé revers unto this,
Whiche envioús taketh his glad-
nesse
Of that he seeth the hevinesse
Of other men. For his welfare
Is, whan he wote another care
Of that an other hath a fulle.
He thenketh him selfe arist³ with
alle.

Suche is the gladship of Envie
In wordés thing and in partie
Full ofté timés eke also
In Lovés cause it stant right so.
If thou, my sone, hast joie had,
Whan thou an other sigh unglad,
Shrive thee therof."—"My fader,
yis.

I am beknowe⁴ unto you this

Of these lovés that loven streite,¹
And for that point which they
coveite

Ben pursuaúntes from yere to yere
In Lovés court, when I may here
How that they climbe upon the
whele,
And whan they wene all shall be
wele

They ben down throwen atté laste,
Than am I fed of that they faste,
And laugh of that I se hem loure,
And thus of that they brewé soure
I drinké swete, and am well esed
Of that I wote they ben disesed.

But this whiche I you tellé here
Is only for my lady dere,
That for none other that I knowe
Me recheth nought who overthrowe
Ne who that stonde in love upright;
But be he squier, be he knight,
Which to my lady warde² pursueth
The more he lost of that he sueth,
The more me thenketh that I winne,
And aun the moré glad withinne
Of that I wote him sorwe endure;
For ever upon suche aventure
It is a comfort, as men sain,
To him the which is wo besein³

To sene an other in his peine,
So that they bothé may compleine,
Where I myself may nought availe,
To sene an other man travaile
I am right glad if he be let.⁴
And though I faré nought the bet,
His sorwe is to min herte a game,
Whan that I knowe it is the same
Which to my lady stant enclined
And hath his lové nought termined,⁵
I am right joyfull in my thought.
If such Envie greveth ought,

¹ Which pleases no other man and grieves oneself.

² *Tho*, then.

³ *Arist*, lifted up.

⁴ *Beknowe*, to confess.

¹ *Streite*, strictly, intensely.

² *To my lady warde*, toward my lady.

³ *Wo besein*, clothed in sorrow.

⁴ *Let*, hindered.

⁵ *Termined*, brought to the desired end.

As I beknowé me coupable,
Ye that be wise and resonable,
My fader, telleth your advise."—

"My sone, Envie in to no prise
Of such a forme I understonde
Ne mighté by no reson stonde.
For this Envie hath such a kinde,
That he woll set himself behinde
To hinder with another wight,
And gladly lese¹ his owné right
To make another lesé his.
And for to knowen how so it is
A talé lich to his matere
I thenké telle, if thou wolte here,
To shewé properly the Vice
Of this Envie and the malice.

"Of Jupiter thus I finde iwrite,
How whilom that he woldé wite²
Upon the pleinté³ whiche he herde
Among the men, how that it ferde,
As of her wrong condición
To do justificación.

And for that causé down he sent
An aungel, which abouté went
That he the sothé knowé may.
So it befell upon a day
This aungel which him shuld en-
forme

Was clothéd in a mannés forme
And overtoke, I understonde,
Two men that wenten over londe,
Through which he thoughté to
aspie

His cause and goth in compaignie.
This aungel with his wordés wise
Opposeth hem in sondry wise,
Now loudé wordés and now softe,
That made hem to desputen ofte.
And eche of hem his reson hadde,
And thus with talés he hem ladde
With good examinación
Till he knew the condición
What men they weré bothé two ;

¹ Lese, lose.

² Wite, know.

³ Pleinte, complaint.

And sigh wel atté lasté tho,
That one of hem was coveitoús,
And his felaw was envioús.
And thus, whan he hath knoulech-
ing,

Anone he feignéð departing
And said he mote algate wende.
But herken now what fell at ende,
For than hemade hem understonde,
That he was there of Goddés
sonde ;¹

And said hem for the kindeship
That they have done him felaship
He woldé do some grace ayein,
And bad that one of hem shuld sain
What thinge him is levést to crave,
And he it shall of yifté have.
And over that² eke forth with all
He saith that other havé shall
The double of that his felawe axeth :
And thus to hem his grace he taxeth.
The coveitous was wonder glad,
And to that other man he bad
And saith, that he first axé sholde ;
For he supposeth that he wolde
Make his axing of worldés good ;
For than he knewe well howe it
stood,

That he him self by double weight
Shall cfté take ; and thus by sleight
By causé that he woldé winne
He badde his felaw first beginne.
This envioús, though it be late
Whan that he sigh³ he mote algate
Make his axingé first, he thought
If he worship or profit sought,
It shall be doubled to his fere :⁴
That wold he chese in no manere.
But than he sheweth what he was
Towarde Envie, and in this cas
Unto this aungel thus he saide
And for his yifté this he praide,

¹ Sonde, sending.

² Over that, beyond that.

³ Sigh, saw.

⁴ Fere, companion.

To make him blinde on his one eye,
 So that his felaw no thing sigh.
 This word was nought so soné spoke,
 That his one eye anon was loke,
 And his felaw forth with also
 Was blinde on both his eyen two.
 Tho was that other gladde inough,
 That oné wept, that other lough,
 He set his one eye at no cost
 Wherof that other two hath lost.
 Of thilke ensample, which fell tho,
 Men tellen now full ofté so.
 The worlde empeireth¹ comunly
 And yet wot none the causé why;
 For it accordeth nough² to kinde³
 Min owné harme to seche and
 finde,

Of that I shall my brother greve
 I mighté never wel acheve.

What saist thou, sone, of this
 folie?"—

"My fader, but³ I shuldé lie
 Upon the point which ye have
 saide,

Yet was min herté never laide
 But in the wise as I you tolde.
 But evermore if that ye wolde
 Ought ellés to my shrifté saie
 Touchend Envie, I woldé praie."—

"My soné, that shall well be do.

Now herken and lay thin ere to.

"**Touchend** as of envious brood
 I wot nought one of allé good,
 But nethéles suche as they be
 Yet there is one, and that is he,
 Which clepéd is Detraction.
 And to conferme his action
 He hath witholde Malebouche,⁴
 Whose tunge nouthur pill ne
 crouche⁵

May hiré so that he pronounce

A plein good word withouten
 frounce,¹

Wheré behinde a mannés backe;
 For though he preise he find some
 lacke,

Whiche of his tale is ay the laste
 That all the prise shall overcaste.
 And though there be no causé why,
 Yet woll he jangle nought forthy,
 As he whiche hath the heraldie
 Of hem that usen for to lie.

For as the nettle whiche up renneth
 The fresshé redé roses brenneth
 And maketh hem fade and pale of
 hewe,

Right so this fals envious hewe²
 In every placé where he dwellecth
 With falsé wordés where he tellecth
 He torneth preising into blame
 And worship into worldés shame.
 Of such lesinge as he compásseth
 Is none so good that he ne passeth
 Betwene his tethe and is backbited
 And through his falsétunge endited.
 Lich to the sharnebudés³ kinde,
 Of whose natúré this I finde,
 That in the hotest of the day,
 Whan comen is the mery May,
 He spret his winge and up he fleeth
 And under all aboute he seeth
 The fairé lusty flourés springe.
 But therof hath he no líkinge.
 But where he seeth of any beste
 The filthé, there he maketh his feste
 And there upon he woll alighte,
 There liketh him none other sighte
 Right so this jangler envious,
 Though he a man se vertuós
 And full of good condición,
 Therof maketh he no mención.
 But ellés, be it nought so lite,⁴
 Wherof that he may set a wite.⁵

¹ *Empeireth*, grows worse.

² *Kinde*, nature.

³ *But*, unless.

⁴ *Witholde Malebouche*, held with Evil Mouth.

⁵ *Pill ne crouche*, plunder not coin.

¹ *Frounce*, frown.

² *Hewe*, servant.

³ *Sharnebudés*, shard-beetle's.

⁴ *Lite*, little.

⁵ *Wite*, blame.

There renneth he with open mouth
Behinde a man and maketh it
couth.¹

But all the vertue whiche he can
That woll he hide, of every man,
And openly the vicé telle,
As he which of the scole of helle
Is taught, and fostred with Envie
Of housholde and of compaignie,
Where that he hath his propre office
To sette on every man a vice.
How so his mouth be comely,
His wordé sit e'ermore awry
And saith the worsté that he may.
And in this wisé now a daye
In Lovés court a man may here
Full ofté pleine of this matere;
That many envious tale is stered,²
Where that it may nought be answered

But yet full ofte it is beleved;
And many a worthy love is greved
Through backbitinge of false Envie.

"If thou have made suche janglerie

In Lovés court, my sone, er this,
Shrive thee therof."—"My fader,
yis.

But wite ye how, nought openly
But other shilé prively,
Whan I my deré lady mete
And thanke how that I am nought
mete

Unto her highé worthinesse,
And eke I se the besinesse
Of all this yongé lusty route
Which all day púrsue her aboute,
And eche of hem his time awaiteth,
And eche of hem his tale affaiteth,³
All to deceive an innocent
Which woll nought be of her⁴ as-
sent.

¹ *Couth*, known.

² *Stered*, stirred up.

³ *Affaiteth*, submitteth.

⁴ *Her*, their.

And for men sain 'unknowen un-
kiste,'

Her thombé she holt in her fiste
So close within her owné honde
That theré winneth no man londe;
She leveth nought all that she
hereth

And thus ful ofte her self she
skiereth¹

And is all ware of *had I wist*.²
But for all that min hert arise
Whan I these comun lovers see
That wol nought holden hem to thre
But well nigh loven over al,
Min hert is³ envioués with all,
And ever I am adrad of guile,
In aunter if with any wile
They might her innocence en-
chaunte.

Forthý my words full ofte I haunte
Behindé hem so as I dare,
Wherof my lady may beware.
I say what ever cometh to mouth,
And wers I wolde if that I couth.
For whan I come unto her speche
All that I may enquire and seche
Of such decepte I telle it all,
And ay the worst in speciall.
So faine I woldé that she wist
How litel they ben for to trist,
And what they wold and what they
mente

So as they be of double entente,
Thus toward hem that wické mene³
My wicked word was ever grene.
And nethéles the soth to telle
In certain if it so befelle
That althertrewest man ibore⁴
To chese amonge a thousand score,
Which were all fully for to triste,
My lady loved, and I it wiste,

¹ *Skiereth*, secureth.

² *Had I known*. Old phrase to express a repentance come too late.

³ Those who mean wickedly.

⁴ The truest of all men born.

Yet rather than he shuldé spede
 I woldé suché talés sprede
 To my lady, if that I might,
 That I shuld all his love unright,
 And therto wolde I do my peine.
 For certés though I shuldé feigne
 And tellé that was never thought,
 For all this worlde I mighté nought
 To suffre an other fully winne
 There as I am yet to beginne;
 For be they good or be they bad
 I woldé none my lady had,
 And that me maketh full ofte asprie
 And usen wordés of Envié,
 And for to make hem bere a
 blame—

And that is but of thilké same—
 The whiche unto my lady drawe,
 For ever on them I rounge¹ and
 gnawe
 And hinder hem all that ever I
 maie.

And that is, sothly for to saie,
 But only to my lady selve;
 I telle it nought to ten ne twelve,
 Therof I wol me well avise
 To speke or jangle in any wise
 That toucheth to my ladies name,
 The whiche in earnest and in game
 I woldé save, in to my deth;
 For me were lever to lacke breth
 Than speken of her name amis.
 Now have ye herd touché of this,
 My fader, in Confession
 And therfore of Detraction
 In Love, of that I have misspoke,
 Tell how ye will it shall be wroke.
 I am all redy for to bere
 My peine, and also to forbere
 What thing that ye woll nought
 allowe;

For who is bounden, he must bowe.
 So woll I bowe unto your hest,
 For I dare maké this behest,

¹ Rounge, nip.

That I to you have nothing hid,
 But told right as it is betid,
 And otherwise of no misspeche
 My consciéncé for to seche.
 I can nought of Envié finde
 That I misspoke have ought be-
 hinde,

Wherof love oughté be mispaide.
 Now have ye herde and I have
 saide,

What woll ye fader, that I do?"—

"My soné, do no moré so,
 But ever kepe thy tungé still,
 Thou might the moré have thy will.
 For as thou saist thy selven here,
 Thy lady is of such manere,
 So wise so ware in allé thinges,
 It nedeth of no bakbitinges,
 That thou thy lady misenforme:
 For whan she knoweth all the
 forme,

How that thy self art envioús,
 Thou shalt nought be so gracióus,
 As thou paraunter¹ shuldest be
 elles.

There wol no man drinke of the
 wellés,

Whiche as he wote² is poison inne.
 And ofté suche as men beginne
 Towardés other, such they finde,
 That set hem ofté fer behinde
 Whan that they wenen be before.
 My godé sone, and thou therfore
 Be ware and levet thy wicked speche,
 Wherof hath fallen ofté wreche³
 To many a man before this time.
 For who so wol his hondés lime,⁴
 They musten be the more unclene.
 For many a moté shall be sene,
 That woldé nought cleve ellés there:
 And that shulde every wise man fere.
 For who so woll another blame,
 He seketh ofte his owné shame,

¹ Paraunter, peradventure.

² Wote, knows.

³ Wreche, revenge.

⁴ Take birdlime in his hands.

Which ellés mighté be right stille.
 Forthý if that it be thy wille
 To stonde upon amendément,
 A tale of great entendément
 I thenké tellé for thy sake,
 Wherof thou might ensample take.

“ **A** worthy knight in Cristés
 lawe

Of greaté Rome, as is the sawe,
 The sceptre haddé for to right,
 Tibéry Constantin he hight,
 Whos wife was cléped Italie.
 But they to-gider of progenie
 No children haddé but a maide,
 And she the God so wel apaide¹
 That al the widé worldés fame
 Spake worship of her godé name.
 Constance, as the croniqué saith,
 She hight, and was so full of faith
 That the greatést of Barbarie,
 Of hem whiche usen marchandie,
 She hath converted, as they come
 To her upon a time in Rome
 To shewen such thing as they
 brought

Which worthely of hem she bought.
 And over that² in suche a wise
 She hath hem with her wordés wise
 Of Cristés feith so full enformed,
 That they therto ben all conformed,
 So that baptismé they receiven
 And all her³ falsé goddés weiven.

“ Whan they ben of the feith
 certein,

They gone to Barbarie ayein,
 And there the Souldan for hem sente
 And axeth hem to what entente
 They have her firsté feith forsake.
 And they, whiche hadden undertake
 The righté feith to kepe and holde,
 The mater of her talé tolde
 With all the holé circumstaunce.

And whan the Souldan of Con-
 stance,

Upon the point that they answerde,
 The beauté and the gracé herde,
 As he which thanné was to wedde,
 In allé haste his causé spedde
 To sendé for the mariáge.
 And furthermore with good coráge
 He saith, be so¹ he may her have,
 That Crist, that came thiš world
 to save,

He woll beleve, and thus recorded
 They ben on either side accorded.
 And there upon to make an ende
 The Souldan his hostáges sende
 To Rome, of princes sonés twelve.
 Wherof the fader in him selve
 Was glad, and with the Pope avised.
 Two Cardinales he hath assised
 With other lordés many mo,
 That with his daughter shulden go
 To se the Souldan be converted.

“ But that which never was wel
 herted

Envíe tho gan to travaíle
 In disturbaunce of this spousaíle
 So prively that none was ware.
 The Moder which the Souldan bare
 Was than alive, and thoughté this
 Unto her selfe : if it so is,
 My sone him wedde in this manere,
 Than have I lost my joíes here,
 For min estate shall so be lassed.
 Thenkend thus, she hath compassed
 By sleight how that she may beguile
 Her sone, and fell within a while,
 Betwene hem two whan that they
 were,

She feigné wordés in his ere
 And in this wisé gan to say :

“ My sone, I am by double way
 With all min herté glad and blithe,
 For that my selfe have ofté sithe¹

¹ *Apaide*, pleased.

² *Over that*, beyond that.

³ *Her*, their.

¹ *Be so*, if so be.

² *Ofté sithe*, oftentimes.

Desiréd thou wolte, as men saith,
Receive and take a newé feith,
Which shall be forthringe of thy
life.

And eke so worshipfull a wife
The doughter of an emperour
To wedde, it shall be great honoúr.
Forthý¹ my sone, I you beseche,
That I such gracie might areche,
Whan that my doughter comé shall,
That I may than in speciáll,
So as me thenketh it is honéste,
Be thilké which the firsté feste
Shall make unto her welcominge.'

"The Souldan graunteth her
axinge.

And she therof was gladdé inough,
For under that anone she drough
With falsé wordés that she spake
Covin² of dethe behinde his backe.
And therupon her ordinaunce
She madé so, that whan Constance
Was comen forth with the Romains,
Of clerkés and of citezeins
A riché festé she hem made.
And mosté whan they weren glade
With falsé covin, which she hadde,
Her close Envié tho she spradde.
And allé tho, that hadden be
Or in appert or in privé
Of counseil to the mariáge,
She slough hem in a sodcin rage
Endlong the borde as they be set,
So that it mighté nought be let.
Her owné soné was nought quite,³
But died upon the samé plite.
But what the highé God woll spare
It may for no perfl misfare.
This worthy maiden which was
there
Stode than as who saith dede for
fere

To se the fest how that it stood,
Whiche all was tornéd into blood.
Thé dissh forth with the cuppe and
all

Bebled¹ they weren over all;
She sigh hem die on every side,
No wonder though she wepte and
cride

Makend many a wofull mone.
When all was slain but she al one,
This oldé fend, this Sarazin
Let take anone this Constantin
With all the good she thider brought
And hath ordeigné as she thought
A naked ship withouté stere,
In which the good and her in fere,
Vitaléd full for yerés five,
Where that the winde it woldé
drive,

She put upon the wawés wilde.

"But he, which allé thinges may
shilde

Thre yere til that she cam to londe
Her ship to stere hath take on
honde,

And in Northumberlond arriveth;²
And happeth thanné that she
driveth

Under a castell with the flood,
Whiche upon Humber banké stood.
And was the kingés owne also
The whiche Allee was clepéd tho;
A Saxon, and a worthy knight,
But he beleveth nought aright.
Of this castéll was castellaine
Elda the kingés chamberlaine,
A knightly man after his lawe.
And whan he sigh upon the wawe³
The ship drivénd aloné so,
He badde anone men shulden go
To se what it betoken may.
This was upon a somer day

¹ *Forthý*, therefore.

² *Covin*, secret contrivance.

³ *Quite*, acquitted.

¹ *Bebled*, covered with blood.

² *Arriveth*, touches shore.

³ Saw upon the waves.

The ship was lokéd and she founde.
 Elda within a litel stounde¹
 It wist, and with his wife anone²
 Toward this yongé lady gone,
 Where that they foundé great
 richesse.

But she her woldé nought confesse,
 Whan they her axen what she was.
 And nethéles upon the cas
 Out of the ship with great worship
 They toke her into felaship
 As they that weren of her glade.
 But she no maner joié made,
 But sorweth sore of that she fonde
 No christendome in thilké londe;
 But ellés she hath all her will,
 And thus with hem she dwelleth
 still.

Dame Hermegild, which was the
 wife

Of Elda, liche her owné life
 Constance loveth; and fell so
 Spekend all day betwene hem two
 Through grace of Goddés purvei-
 aúnce

This maiden taughté the creaúnce
 Unto this wife so parfily,
 Upon a day that fasté by
 In presence of her husébonde,
 Where they go walkend on the
 stronde,

A blindé man which cam ther ladde
 Unto this wife criénd he badde
 With bothe his hondés up and
 praide

To her, and in this wise he saide:
 'O Hermegilde, which Cristés feith
 Enforméd as Constance saith
 Received hast: yif me my sight!'

"Upon this worde her herte
 afflight

Thenkend what was besté to done,
 But nethéles she herde his bone²
 And saide: 'Intrust of Cristés lawe,

¹ Stounde, interval, hour. ² Bone, petition.

Which done was on the crosse and
 slawe,¹

Thou blindé man beholde and se!
 With that, to God upon his kne
 Thonkend, he toke his sight anone,
 Wherof they merveil everychone,
 But Elda wondreth most of alle;
 This open thing whiche is besafalle
 Concludeth² him by suche a way
 That he the feith mo nede obey.

"Now list what fell upon this
 thinge.

This Elda forth unto the kinge
 A morwé toke his way and rode,
 And Hermegild at home abode
 Forth with Constance well at ese.
 Elda, which thought his king to
 plese,

As he that than unwedded was,
 Of Constance all the pleiné cas,
 As godélich as he couth, tolde.
 The king was glad, and said he
 wolde

Comé thidér in suche a wise,
 That he him might of her avise."
 The time appointed forth withall
 This Elda truste in speciall
 Upon a knight which fro childhode
 He had updrawe into manhode,
 To him he tolde all that he thought;
 Wherof that after him forthought.⁴

And nethéles at thilké tide
 Unto his wife he bad him ride
 To maké redy all thinge
 Aycinst the cominge of the kinge;
 And saith that he him self to-fore
 Thenketh for to come, and bad
 therfore

That he him kepe,⁵ and tolde him
 whan.

¹ The law of Christ who was put upon the
 crosse and slain.

² Concludeth, decides.

³ Him avise, take note.

⁴ Him forthought, it repented him.

⁵ Him kepe, have care for him, look for him.

This knight rode forth his waié than.
 And soth was, that of timé passed
 He had in all his wit compasséd,
 Howe he Constancé mighté winne.
 But he sigh tho no spede¹ therinne.
 Wherof his lust began to abate,
 And that was love is thanné hate.
 Of her honour he had Envie,
 So that upon his trecherie
 A lesinge² in his herte he cast.
 Til he come home he hieth fast,
 And doth his lady to understonde
 The message of her husébonde.
 And therupon the longé daie
 They setten thingés in arraie,
 That all was as it shuldé be
 Of every thinge in his degre.
 And whan it came into the night,
 This wife with her hath to beddé
 dight

Where that this maiden with her
 lay.

This falsé knight upon delay,
 Hath taried till they were aslepe,
 As he that woll his timé kepe
 His dedly werkés to fulfille.
 And to the bed he stalketh stille,
 Where that he wisté was the wife,
 And in his honde a rasour knife
 He bar, with whiche her throte he
 cut

And privély the knife he put
 Under that other beddé side,
 Where that Constancé lay beside.
 Elda come hom the samé night
 And stillé with a privé light,
 As he that woldé nought awake
 His wife, he hath his waié take
 Into the chambre, and there lig-
 génd

He fonde his dedé wife bledénd,
 Where that Constancé fasté by
 Was falle aslepe; and sodeinly

He cried aloudé, and she awoke,
 And forth with all she cast a loke
 And sigh this lady bledé there,
 Wherof swouné dé dede for fere
 She was, and stille as any stone
 She laie, and Elda therupon
 Into the castell clepeth out,
 And up sterte every man about;
 Into the chambre forth they went.
 But he whiche all untrouthé ment
 This falsé knight among hem all
 Upon this thing whiche is befall
 Saith that Constancé hath don this
 dede.

And to the bed with that he yede
 After the falsehed of his speche
 And made him theré for to seche,¹
 And fond the knife where he it laid.
 And than he cried and than he
 said:

‘Lo, se the knife all bloody here,
 What nedeth more in this matere
 To axe?’ and thus her innocéce
 He sclandreth there in audiéce
 With falsé wordés, whiche he
 feigneth.

But yet for al that ever he pleineth.

“Elda no full credéncé toke.
 And happéd that there lay a boke,
 Upon the which, whan he it sighe,
 This knight hath swore, and said
 on highe

That allé men it mighten wite,²—
 ‘Now by this boke which here is
 write,

Constance is gultif well I wote.’
 With that the honde of Heven him
 smote

In token of that he was forswore,
 That he has bothe his eyen lore,³
 Out of his hed the samé stounde
 They stert, and so they weré
 founde.

¹ Sigh tho no spede, saw then no success.

² Lesinge, falsehood.

¹ Seche, seek.

² Wite, know.

³ Lorr, lost.

A vois was herd whan that they fel,
Which saide: 'O dampnéd man
to helle,

Lo, thus hath God thy sclaunder
wroke,

That thou ayein Constánce hath
spoke:

Beknowe the sothe¹ er that thou
deie.'

And he tolde out his felonie
And starf forth with his talc anone.

Into the grounde where allé gone,
This dedé lady was begrave.

Elda, which thought his honour
save

All that he may, restreigneth sorwe.

"For by the second day a
morwe

The king came, as they were ac-
corded,

And whan it was to him recorded,
What God hath wrought upon this
chaunce,

He toke it into remembraunce
And thoughté moré than he saide;

For all his holé herte he laide
Upon Constánce, and saide he

shulde

For love of her, if that she wolde,
Baptismé take and Cristés feith

Beleve, and over that he saith
He wol her wedde, and upon this

Assuréd eche til other is.

And for to maké shorté tales

There came a bisshop out of Wales
Fro Bangor, and Lucie he hight,

Which through the grace of God
almight

The king with many an other mo
He cristnéd, and betwene hem two

He hath fulfilled the mariáge.

But for no lust ne for no rage

She tolde hem never what she was.

And nethéles upon this cas

¹ Confess the truth.

The king was glad, how so it stood,
For well he wist and understood
She was a noble creäture.

The highé Maker of Natúre
Her hath visíté in a throwe,

That it was openliché knowe
She was with childé by the kinge,

Wherof above all other thinge
He thonketh God and was right

glad.

And fell that time he was bestad
Upon a weire, and musté ride.

And while he shuldé there abide
He left at home to kepe his wife

Suche as he knewe of holy life,
Elda forth with the bisshop eke.

And he with power go to seke
Ayein the Scottes for to fonde¹

The werré whiche he toke on
honde.

The timé set of kinde is come,
This lady hath her chambre nome²

And of a soné boré fulle,

Wherof that she was joiéfull,

She was delivered sauf and sone.³

The bisshop, as it was to done,

Yaf him baptisme and Moriscalleth.

And therupon as it befalleth

With letters writen of recórde

They send unto her legé lorde

That kepers weren⁴ of the quene.

And he, that shuldé go betwene,

The messanger to Knarésburgh

(Which town he shuldé passé
thurgh)

Ridendé cam the firsté daie;

The kingés moder theré lay,

Whose righté namé was Domilde,

Whiche after all the causé spilde.

For he, which thonk deservé wolde,

Unto this lady goth and tolde

¹ Fonde, try issues in.

² Nome, taken

³ Safe and sound.

⁴ They that were keepers of the queen sent
to their liege lord

Of his messáge al how it ferde.
 And she with feigné^d joie it herde
 And yaf him yestés largély,
 But in the night al privély
 She toke the letters whiche he had,
 Fro point to point and overrad¹
 As she that was through out un-
 trewe,

And let do writen other newe
 In stede of hem, and thus they speke.

“Ouf legé lord, we thee bescke,
 That thou with us ne be nought
 wroth,

Though we such thing as is thee
 loth

Upon our trouthe cêrtifie.

Thy wifé, whiche is of fairie,
 Of suche a child delivered is,
 Fro kindé,² which stant all amis.
 But for it shuldé nought be saie
 We have it kept out of the waie
 For drede of puré woridés shame,
 A pouer childe, and in the name
 Of thilké whiche is so misbore,
 We toke and therto we be swore,
 That none but only you and wê
 Shall known of this priveté.
 Morice it hat, and thus men wene
 That it was boren of the quene
 And of thine owné bodie gete.
 But this thing may nought be for-
 yete,

That thou ne sende us wordc anone.
 What is thy willé therupon.’

“This letter, as thou hast herd
 devise,

Was counterfet in suche a wise,
 That no man shulde it apperceive.
 And she which thoughté to deceive
 It laith where she that other toke.
 This messenger, whan he awoke,
 And wist nothngé how it was,
 Arose and rode the greaté pas

And toke his letter to the kinge.
 And whan he sigh¹ this wonder
 thinge,

He maketh the messenger no chere,
 But nethéles in wise manere
 He wrote ayein, and yaf him charge
 That they i.e. suffre nought at large
 His wife to go but kepe her still,
 Till they have herd more of his
 will.

“This messenger was yestéles,
 But with his letter nethéles,
 Or be him lefe or be him loth,
 In allé haste ayeine he goth
 By Knaresburgh, and as he went,
 Unto the moder his entent
 Of that he fond toward the kinge
 He tolde, and she upon this thinge
 Saith, that he shulde abide all night
 And made him feste and chere
 aright,

Feignend as though she couthe him
 thonke.²

But he with strong wine which he
 dronke

Forth with the travaile of the day
 Was drunke aslepe, and while he lay
 She hath his letters oversay,
 And forméd in an other way
 There was a newé letter write,

“Which saith: ‘I do you for to
 write,

That through the counseil of you two
 I stonde in point to ben undo,
 As he whiche is a king deposed,
 For every man it hath supposed
 How that my wife Constáncé is fay.
 And if that I, they sain, delay
 To put her out of compaignie,
 The worship of my regalie
 Is lore, and over this they telle
 Her child shal nought among hem
 dwelle

¹ And read them over from point to point.

² Fro kinde, contrary to nature.

¹ Sigh, saw.

² Couthe him thonke, paid him thanks.

To claimen any heritáge.
 So can I se none avauntáge,
 But all is lost, if she abide.
 Forthý to loke on every side
 Toward the mischeffe as it is
 I chargé you and biddé this,
 That ye the samé ship vittaile,
 In which that she toke arrivaile,
 Therin and putteth¹ bothé two
 Her self forth with her childe also,
 And so forth brought into the depe
 Betaketh her the see² to kepe.
 Of fouré daiés time I set
 That ye this thing no lenger let,³
 So that your life be nought forfece.⁴

"And thus this letter counterfete
 The messenger, which was unware,
 Upon the kingés halvé bare
 And where he shulde it hath betake.
 But whan that they have hedé take
 And rad that writen is withinne,
 So great a sorwé they beginne,
 As they her⁴ owné moder sighen
 Brent in a fire before her⁴ eyen.
 There was wepinge and there was
 wo,
 But finally the thinge is do.
 Upon the see they have her
 brought,
 But she the causé wisté nought,
 And thus upon the flood they
 wone⁵

This lady with her yonge sone.
 And than her hondés to the heven
 She straught, and with a mildé
 steven⁶

Knelend upon her baré kne
 She saide: 'O highé magesté,
 Which seest the point of every
 trouth,
 Take of thy wofull woman routh

¹ *Therin and putteth*, and put therein.

² *Betaketh her the see*, commit her to the sea.

³ *Let*, delay.

⁴ *Wone*, dwell.

⁵ *Her*, their.

⁶ *Steven*, voice.

And of this childe that I shal
 kepe!¹

And with that word she gan to
 wepe

Swounéd as dede, and there she
 lay.

But he, whiche allé thingés may,
 Conforteth her, and atté laste
 She loketh, and her eyen caste
 Upon her childe, and saydé this:

'Of me no maner charge it is
 What sorwe I suffre, but of thee
 Me thenketh it is great pitee,
 For if I stervé thou shalt deie,
 So mote I ngdés by that weie
 For moderhed and for tendernesse

With all min holé besinesse
 Ordeigné me for thilke office
 As she which shall be thy norice.'
 Thus was she strengthened for to
 stonde.

And tho she toke her childe in
 honde

And yaf it souke and ever amonge
 She wepte and otherwhilé songe
 To rocké with her childe aslepe;
 And thus her owné childe to kepe
 She hath under the Goddes curc.

"And so fell upon aventure,
 Whan thilké yerc hath made his
 ende,

Her ship, so as it mosté wende.
 By strength of wind which God
 hath yive

Estward was into Spainé drive
 Right fast under a castell walle
 Where that an hethen admiralie
 Was lorde, and he a steward had
 One Thelóús, whiche al was bad,
 A fals knight and a renegate.
 He goth to loke in what estate
 The ship was comen, and there he
 fonde

¹ *Shal kepe*, have to take care of (shall, with the sense of obligation).

Forth with a childe upon her honde
This lady where she was alone.
He toke good hede of the persóné
And sigh she was a worthy wight,
And thought he wolde upon the
night

Demene her at his owné wille ;
And let her be therinné stille,
That no man sigh she nought¹
that day.

At Góddes wille and thus she lay
Unknowé what her shall betide.
And fell so that by nightés tide
This knight withouté felaship
Hath take a boot and cam to ship
And thought of her¹ his lust to take,
And swore, if she him daunger
make,

That certáinly she shuldé deie.
She sigh there was none other weie
And saide he shulde her well con-
fórté,

That he first loked out at porte,
That no man weré nigh the stede
Which mighté knowé what they
dede,

And than he may do what he wolde.
He was right glad that she so tolde,
And to the port anone he ferde.

"She praieth God, and he her
herde.

And sodeinlich he was out throwe
And dreint,² and tho³ began to
blowe

Windé mevábale fro the londe,
And thus the mighty Goddes honde
Her hath conveiéed and defended.
And whan thre yere ben full de-
spended,

Her ship was drive upon a daie,
Where that a great navié laie
Of shippés, all the worlde at ones.
And as God woldé for the nones

Her ship goth in amonge hem alle
And stint nought er it be befallé
And hath that vessel under gete
Which maister was of all the flete ;
But there it resteth and abode.

This greté ship on anker rode,
The lord come forth, and whan he
sigh

That other ligge on bord so nigh
He wondreth what it mighté be,
And bad men to go in and se.
This lady tho was crope a side
As she that wolde her selven hide,
For she ne wisté what they were.
They sought about and fond her
there

And broughten up her childe and her.
And therupon this lord to spire¹
Began for whenné that she came
And what she was. Quod she :
'I am

A woman woefully bestad.
I had a lorde and thus he bad,
That I forth with my litel sone
Upon the wawés shuldé wone.
But why the causé was I not,²
But he whiche allé thingés wot
Yet hath, I thonk him, of his might
My childe and me so kepte upright,
That we be saufé bothé two.'—

This lorde her axeth evermo
How she beleveth, and she saith :
'I leve and trust in Cristés feith,
Which died upon the rodé tre,'—
'What is thy namé ?' tho quod he.
'My name is Custé,' she him saide.
But furthermore for nought he
praide

Of her estaté to knowe pleine,
She wolde him nothing ellés saine
But of her namé, which she feigned,
All other thingés she restreigned,
That o word moré she ne tolde.
This lord than axeth if she wolde

¹ Spire, enquire, 'speir.' ² Not, know not.

¹ She saw not any man.

² Dreint, drowned.

³ Tho, then.

With him abide in compaignie,
And saide, he came from Barbarie
To Romé ward and home he went.
Tho she supposeth what it ment
And saith, she woldé with him wende
And dwelle unto her lives ende,
If it so be to his plesaunce.

And thus upon her ácqueintaunce
He tolde her plainly as it stood,
Of Rome how that the gentil blood
In Barbarie was betrayed
And therupon he hath assaid
By werie, and taken such ven-
geaunce

That none of thilke euil alliaunce,
By whom the treson was compassed,
Is from the swerd alivé passed.
But of Constancé how it was
That couthe¹ he knowé by no cas
Where she becam, so as he said;
Her ere unto his word she laid,
But furthermore made she no chere.
And nethéles in this matére
It happed that ilké timé so
This lord with whom she shuldé go
Of Romé was the senatour
And of her fader thempoúré
His brother doughter hath to wive,
Which hath her fader eke on live,²
And was Salustés clepéd tho,
His wife Heliné hight also,
To whom Constancé was cousine.
Thus to the sike a medicine
Hath God ordeigné of his grace,
That forthwith in the samé place
This senatour his trouthe plight
For ever while he livé might
To kepe her in worship and in wele,
Be so that God woll yive her hele,
This lady, which Fortúne him sende.
And thus by shippé forth sailénde
Her and her childe to Rome be
brought,

And to his wife tho he besought

¹ *Courte*, could.

On live, alive.

To take her into compaignie.
And she, which couth of curtesie
All that a good wife shuldé conne,¹
Was inly glad, that she hath wonne
The felaschip of so good one.
This emperourés doughter Custe
Forth with the doughter of Saluste
Was kept, but no man redély
Knew what she was, and nought
forthý

They thoughten well she haddé be
In her estate of high degré,
And every life her loveth wele.

“Now herken : thilke unstable
whelq

Whiche ever torneth went aboute.
The king Allec, while he was oute,
As thou to-fore hast herd this cas,
Deceivéd through his moder was.
But whan that he come home ayein,
He axeth of his chamberlain
And of the bisshop eke also,
Where they the quené hadden do.
And they answerdé there he bad
And have him thilké letter rad
Whiche he hem sendé for warrá-
And tolde him plainly . s it stai
And sain, it thought hem great pite
To se a worthy one as she
With suche a childe as there was
bore

So sodeinly to be forlore.
He axeth hem, what child that
were.

And they him saidé, that no where
In all the world, though men it
sought,

Was never woman that forth
brought

A fairer child than it was one.
And than he axeth hem anone,
Why they ne hadden writen so,
They tolden, so they hadden do.

¹ Who knew all that a good wife should know of courtesy.

He saidé, nay. They saiden, yis.
The letter shewéd, rad¹ it is,
Which they forsoken every dele.²
Tho was it understandé wele
That there is treson in the thinge.
The messenger to-fore the kinge
Was brought and, sodeinlich op-
posed

As he which no thinge hath sup-
posed

But allé wel, began to saie,
That he no where upon the waie
Abode but only in a stede,³
And causé why that he so dede,
Was, as he wenté to and fro,
At Knaresburgh by nightés two
The kingés moder made him
dwelle.

And when the king it herdé telle,
Within his hert he wiste als faste
The treson whiche his moder caste;
And thought he woldé nought
abide

But forth right in the samé tide
He toke his hors and rode anone,
With him there riden many one,
To Knaresburgh, and forth they
wente

And lich the fire which thonder
hente⁴

In suche a rage, as saith the boke,
His moder sodeinlich he toke
And saide unto her in this wise:
‘O beste of helle, in what iurse⁵
Hast thou deserved for to deie,
That hast so falsely put aweie
With treson of thy backbitinge
The trewest at my knouelchinge
Of wivés and the most honést?
But I wol maké this behest,

I shall be vengéd or¹ I go.’
And let a firé do make tho
And bad men for to caste her inne.
But first she tolde out all the sinne,
And did hem allé for to wite
How she the letters haddé write,
Fro point to point as it was
wrought.

And tho she was to dethé brought
And brent to-fore her sonés eye,
Wherof these other, whiche it sighe
And herden how the causé stood,
Sain, that the jugément was good
Of that her sone her hath so served;
For she it haddé wel deserved
Through treson of her falsé tunge,
Which through the lond was after
songe,

Constance and² every. wight com-
pleineth.

But he, whom allé wo distreigneth,
This sorwefull king, was so bestad
That he shall never more be glad,
He saith, eftsoné for to wedde
Till that he wist how that she spedde
Which haddé ben his firsté wife;
And thus his yonge unlusty life
He driveth forth so as he may.

“Till it befeí upon a day,
Whan he his werrés hadde acheved
And thought he woldé be releved
Of soulé hele upon the feith
Whiche he hath také, than he saith,
That he to Rome in pelrináge
Wol go, where Popé was Pelage,
To take his absolución.
And upon this condición
He made Edwin his lieutenaúnt,
Whiche heir to him was apparaúnt,
That he the lond in his abséce
Shall reule. And thus by providéce
Of allé thingés well begonne
He toke his leve and forth is gone.

¹ Rad, read.

² Forsoken, denied in every part.

³ A stede, one place.

⁴ Hente, pursued and seized, i.e., lightning,
the fire on which the thunder pounced

⁵ Iurse, judgment.

¹ Or, ere.

² And every one laments for Constance.

"Elda, which was with him tho
there,

Er they fulliche at Romé were,
Was sent to-foré to purveie,
And he his guide upon the weie,
In helpé to ben herbergeour¹
Hath axéd who was senatour,
That he his namé mighté kenne.
Of Capadoce, he saide, Arcenne
He hight and was a worthy knyght.
To him goth Elda tho forth right
And tolde him of his lord tidng
And praidé, that for his comíng
He wolde assigne him herbergáge.
And he so did of good coráge.

"Whan all is do that was to done,
The kinge him self cam after sonc.
This senatour whan that he come
To Custe and to his wife at home,
Hath tolde howsuche a Kinge Allee
Of great array to the citee
Was come, and Cust upon his tale
With herté close and colour pale
A swouné² felle, and he merveilèth
So sodeinly what thinge her eileth,
And caught her up, and whan she
woke

She siketh with a pitous loke
And feigneth sikenesse of the see,
But it was for the kinge Allee,
For joíe which fell in her thought,
That God him hath to towné
brought.

This King hath spoké with the
Pope

And tolde all that he couthé grope
What greveth in his consciéce,
And than he thought in reverence
Of his estate, er that he went
To make a feste, and thus he sent
Unto the senatour to come
Upon the morwe and other some

To sitté with him at the mete.
This tale hath Custé nought for-
yete,

But to Moríce her soné tolde
That he upon the morwe sholde
In all that ever he couth and
might

Be present in the Kingés sight,
So that the Kinge him ofte sigh.
Moríce to-foré the Kingés eye
Upon the morwe, where he sat,
Full ofté stood, and upon that
The King his chere upon him
caste

And in his face him thought als
faste

He sigh his owné wife Constáncé,
For Nature, as in ressemblaunce
Of face, him liketh so to clothe
That they were of a suité bothe.
The King was movéd in his thought
Of that he sigh, and knew it nought;
This childe he loveth kindély,
And yet he wot no causé why;
But wel he sigh and understode,
That he toward Arcenné stode,
And axeth him anone right there
If that this childe his soné were.
He saidé: 'ye,¹ so I him calle,
And wolde it weré so befallé,
But it is all in other wise,'

And tho² began he to devise,
How he the childés moder fonde
Upon the see, from³ every londe,
Within a ship was steréles;
And how this lady helpéles
Forth with her childe he hath forth
drawe.

The Kinge hath understood his
sawe

The childés name and axeth tho,
And what the moder hight also,
That he him woldé telle he praide.

¹ *Herbergeour*, one sent before to
arrange for a stately company.
² *A swouné*, in swoon.

¹ I.e., ye.

² *Tho*, then.

³ *From*, away from.

‘Morice this child¹ is hote,’¹ he
saide,

‘His moder hatté Custe, and this
I not² what maner name it is,’
But Allee wiste wel inough,
Wherof somdele smilénd he lough.
For Custe in Saxon is to saine
Constance upon the word Romaine.
But who that couthe specife,
What tho fell in his fantasie,
And how his witte abouté renneth
Upon the love in which he bren-
neth

It were a wonder for to here.
For he was nouth³ there ne here,
But clene out of him selfe away,
That he not what to thenke or say,
So faine he wolde it weré she ;
Wherof his hertés priveté
Began the werre of ye and nay,
The whiche in such balaúncé lay
That contenaúncé for a throwe⁴
He losté, till he mighté knowe
The soth. But in his memorie
The man which lieth in purgatorie,
Desireth nought the Heven more
That he ne longeth also sore
To wité what him shall betide.
And whan the bordés were aside
And every man was rise aboute,
The Kinge hath weived all the route
And with the senatour alone
He spake and praid him of a bone,⁴
To se this Custé where she dwelleth
At home with him, so as he telleth.
The senatour was wel apaide ;
This thing no lenger was delaide.
To se this Custé goth the Kinge,
And she was warnéd of the thinge,
And with Heleiné forth she came
Ayein the Kinge, and he tho name⁵

Good hede, and whan he sigh his
wife,
Anone with all his hertés life
He caught her in his armes and
kiste.

Was never wight that sigh ne wiste¹
A man that moré joié made,
Wherof they weren allé glade
Which herdé tellen of this chaunce.
This King tho with his wife Con-
stance,

Whiche had a great part of his will,
In Romé for a timé still
Abode and made him well at ese.
But so yet couthe he never plesé
His wife, that she him worldé saine
Of her estate the trouthe pleine,
Of what contré that she was bore
Ne what she was, and yet therfore
With all his wit he hath done seke.
Thus as they ligh in bedde and
speke,
She praith him and counsefleth
both,

That for the worship of hem both
So that her thought it were honéste
He wolde an honouráble feste
Make er he went in that citee,
Where themperoúr him self shall
be.

He graunteth all that she him
praide.

But as men in that timé saide,
This emperoúr, fro thilké day
That first his daughter went away,
He was than after never gladde,
But what that any man him badde
Of gracé for his daughter sake
That gracé wolde he nought for-
sake,²

And thus ful great almésse he dede.
Wherof he haddé many a bede.³

¹ *Flote*, called.

² *Not*, know not.

³ *Throue*, space of time

⁴ *Bone*, petition.

⁵ *Name*, took

¹ *Sigh ne wiste*, saw or knew.

² *Forsake*, refuse.

³ *Bede*, prayer

“This Emperour out of the towne,
Within a ten mile enviroûne,
Where as it thought him for the
beste

Hath sondry places for to reste,
And as fortuné woldé tho
He was dwellénd at one of tho.
The kinge Allec forth with thassent
Of Custe his wife hath thider sent
Morice his sone, as he was taught,
To themperour, and he goth
straught

And in his fader halve¹ he sought
As he whiche of his lordship sought,
That of his highé worthinesse
He woldé do so great mekenesse
His owné towne to come and se
And yive a time in the citee,
So that his fader might him gete
That he wolde onés with him ete.
This lorde hath graunted his re-
queste.

And whan the day was of the feste,
In worship of her² Emperour
The kinge and eke the senatoúr
Forth with her wíves bothé two,
With many a lorde and lady mo,
On hors gan riden him ayeine,
Till it befell upon a pleine
They sigh waere as he was coménd.
With that Constance anone praiénd
Spake to her lord that he abide,
‘So that I may to-foré ride
To ben upon his bienvenue³
The firsté which shall him saluc.’
And thus after her lordés graunte
Upon a mulé white amblaúnte
Forth with a fewé rode this quene.
They wondred what she woldé
mene,

And riden after softé pas.
But whan this lady comen was
To themperour, in his presence

She saide aloud in audience :
‘My lord, my fader, wel you be !
And of this timé that I se
Your honour and your godé hele,
Whiche is the helpe of my quarele,
I thonke unto the goddés might.’
For joie his herté was aflight
Of that she tolde in remembraunce.
And whan he wiste, it was Con-
stánce,

Was never fader half so blithe.
Wepend he kiste her often sithe,
So was his hert all overcome,
For though his moder weré come
Fro deth to life out of the grave,
He might no moré wonder have
Than he hath whan that he her
sigh.

With that her owné lord come nigh
And is to themperour obeied.
And whan the fortune is bewreied,¹
How that Constánce is come
abouté,

So harde an herté was none oute
That he for pité tho ne wepte.
Arcennus which her fonde and
kepte

Was thanné glad of that is falle,
So that with joie among hem alle
They riden in at Romé gate.
This Emperour thought all to late,
Till that the Popé weré come
And of the lordés sendé some
To pray him that he woldé haste.
And he cam forth in allé haste,
And whan that he this talé herde,
How wonderly this chauncé ferde,
He thonketh god of his mirácle,
To whos might may be none ob-
stácle.

The King a noble feste hem made,
And thus they weren allé glad.
A parlément er that they went
They setten, unto this entent,

¹ On his father's behalf

² Her, their.

³ *Bienvenue*, welcome.

¹ *Bewreied*, disclosed.

To putten Rome in full espeire,¹
That Morice was apparant heire
And shulde abidé with hem stille,
For such was all the londés wille.

“Whan every thing was fully
spoke

Of sorwe and queint² was all the
smoke,

Tho toke his leve Allee the Kinge
And with full many a riché thinge
Which temperour him hadde
yive

He goth a gladdé life to live.
For he Constance hath in his honde,
Which was the comfort of the londe.
For whan that he cam home ayeyn,
There is no tungé that might sain,
What joié was that ilké stounde
Of that he hath his quené founde,
Which first was sent of Goddés
sonde.³

Whan she was driven upon the
stronde,

By whom the misbeleve of sinne
Was lefte and Cristés feith came
inne

To hem that whilome weré blinde.
But he, which hindreth every kinde
And for no gold may be forbought,
The Deth, coménd er he besought
Toke with this king such acquain-
taunce

That he with all his retenaunce
Ne mighte nought defend his life;
And thus he parteth from his wife
Which thanné madé sorwe enough.
And therupon her herté drough
To leven Engélonde for ever
And go where that she haddé lever,
To Romé whanné⁴ that she came.
And thus of all the lond she nam⁵

Her leve, and goth to Rome ayeyn.
And after that the bokés sain
She was nought theré but a throwe
Whan Deth, of kinde,¹ hath over-
throwe

Her worthy fader, which men saide
That he betwene her armés deide.
And afterward the yere suénde
Tho God hath made of her an ende,
And fro this worldés fairie²
Hath take her into compaignie.

“Morice her soné was corouéne,
Which so ferforth was abandouéne
To Cristés feith that men him
calle

Morice the Christenest of alle.
And thus the whel meving of Love
Was atté lasté set above.
And so, as thou hast her to-fore,
The falsé tungés weren lore³
Whiche upon Lové wolden lie.
Forthy touchénde of this Envie,
Which longeth unto Bakbitinge,
Be waré thou make no lesinge
In hindring of another wight.
And if thou wolt be taught aight,
What mischefe Bakbitingé doth,
By other waie a talé soth
Now might thou heré next suénde,
Which to this Vice is accordénde.

“In a cronique as thou shalt
wite

A great ensample I finde write,
Whiche I shall telle upon this
thinge.

Philip of Macedoiné Kinge
Two sonés haddé by his wife,
Whose famé yet in Grece is rife.
Demetrius the firsté brother
Was hote⁴ and Perseús that other.
Demetrius men saiden tho⁵
The better knight was of the two,

¹ *Espeire*, hope
² *Queint*, quenched; and all the smoke of
sorrow was quenched.

³ *Sonde*, sending. ⁴ *Whanne*, whence.

⁵ *Nam*, took.

¹ *Of kinde*, in the course of Nature.

² *Future*, changes and illusions.

³ *Love*, lost.

⁴ *Hote*, called.

⁵ *Tho*, then.

To whom the lond was attendánt
As he, whiche heir was apparánt
To regne aftér his faders day.
But that thing which no water may
Quenche in this world, but ever
brenneth,

Into his brothers hert it renneth,
The proud Envie of that he sighe¹
His brother shuldé climbe on highe
And he to him mot than obeie;
That may he suffre by no waie,
With strengthé durst he no thing
fonde,²

So toke he lesinge upon honde
When he sigh time, and spake
therto.

For it befell that timé so
His fader greté werrés hadde
With Romé, whiche he streitú ladde
Through mighty hond of his man-
hód,

As he which bath inough knighthód,
And ofte hem haddé fore greved.
But er the werré were acheved,
As he was upon ordenaunce
At home in Grece, it fell par
chaunce

Demetrius, whiche ofte aboute
Ridénd was, stodé that time out,
So that this Perse in his absénce.
Which bar tue tunge of pestilénce
With falsé wordés whiche he
feigneth

Upon his owné brother pleineth
In priveté behinde his bake,
And to his fader thus he spake:

‘My deré fader, I am holde
By way of kinde, as reson wolde,
That I fro you shall nothing hide
Which mighté torne in any side
Of youre estate into grevaúnce.
Forthý miq hertés obeisaúnce
As toward you I thenké kepe.

For it is good ye také kepe¹
Upon a thing whiche is me tolde.
My brother hath us allé solde
To hem of Rome, and you also,
For thanné they behote² him so
That he with hem shall regne in
pees.

Thus hath he cast, for his encrés,
That your estate shall go to nought.
And this to prové shall be brought
So ferforth that I undertake.
It shall nought wel mow be for-
sake.’³

“The kinge upon this tale
answerd

And said, ‘If this thing which he
herd

Be soth and may be brought to
prove,

It shall nought be to his behove⁴
Which so has shapen us the werste,
For he him self shall be the ferste
That shall be dede, if that I may.’

Thus afterwarde upon a day,
Whan that Demetrius was come,
Anone his fader hath him nome⁵
And bad unto his brother Perse,
That he his talé shall reherse
Of thilké treson whiche he tolde.
And he whiche all untrouthé woldé
Counseileth that so high a nede
Be treted where as it may spede,
In comun place of jugément.

The King therto yaf his assent.

“Demetrius was put in holde,
Wherof that Perseús was bolde.
Thus stood the trouth under the
charge

And the falsehedé goth at large,
Which through behest hath over-
come

The greatest of the lordés some,

¹ *Sighe*, saw.

² *Fonde*, try.

¹ *Take kepe*, take heed.

² *Behote*, promised.

⁴ *Behove*, advantage.

Forake, denied.

Nome, taken.

That priveliche of his accorde
They stonde as wisse of recorde,
The juge was made favourable;
Thus was the lawe deceivable
So ferforth that the trouthe fonde
Rescoussé¹ none, and thus the
londe

Forth with the King deceived were:
The giltyez was dampned there
And deide upon accusément,
But suche a fals conspirément,
Though it be privé for a throwe,²
God woldé nought it were unknowe,
And that was afterward wel proved
In him which hath the deth con-
troved

Of that his brother was so slaine.
This Perseus was wonder faine
As he that tho was apparant
Upon the regne³ and expectant,
Wherof he wax so proude and veine
That he his fader in disdeigne
Hath take, and sette at none ac-
compte,

As he which thought him to sur-
mounte,

That where he was first debonaire
He was tho rebell and contraire,
And nought as heir but as a kinge
He toke upon him allé thinge
Of malice and of tirannie

In contempte of regalitie
Livend his fader, and so wrought
That than the fader him bethought
And sighe to whether side it drough,
Anone he wisté well enough
How Perse after his falsé tonge
Hath so thenvious bellé rongé,
That he hath slain hisowné brother;
Wherof as thanne he knew none
other

But sodeinly the juge he nome⁴

Which corrupt sat upon the dome,¹
In suche a wise and² hath him
pressed

That he the soth him hath con-
fessed

Of all that hath ben spoke and do.
More sory than the king was tho
Was never man upon this molde,
And thought in certain that he
wolde

Vengeauncé take upon this wronge.
But thother partie was so stronge,
That for the lawe of no statúte
There may no right ben execute.
And upon this división

The lond was tornéd up so downe,
Wherof his herte is so distraught
That he for puré sorwe hath caught
The maladie of which nature
Is queint³ in every creature.

“And whan this King was passéd
thus,

This falsé tungéd Perseus
The regiment⁴ hath underfonge.
But there may nothing stondé longé
Whiche is nought upon trouthe
grounded.

For God, which hath al thingé
bounded

And sigh⁵ the falsehed of his guile,
Hath set him but a litel while
That he shall regne upon depose,
For sodeinlich right as a rose
So sodeinliché down he felle.

“In thilké timé, so it befelle,
This newé King of newé pride
With strengthé shope him for to
ride⁶

And saide he woldé Rome waste:
Wherof he made a besy haste,

¹ Upon the dome, in judgment.

² And in such a wise.

³ Of which nature is queint, by which nat-
is extinguished (caught his death).

⁴ Regiment, rule.

⁵ Sigh, saw.

⁶ Ride, make raid.

¹ Rescoussé, rescue.

² Throwe, space of time.

³ Heir apparent to the kingdom.

⁴ Nome, took.

And hath assembled him an host
In all that ever he might most,
What man that mighte wepen bere
Of all he woldé none forbere.
So that it mighte nought be nombred
The folké which was after encom-
bred

Through him that God wolde over-
throw.

"Anon it was at Romé know
The pompé, which that Persé lad,
And the Romainés that time had
A consul which was clepéd thus
By namé Paul Emilius,
A noble, a worthy knight withalle,
And he which chef was of hem alle
This werre on honde hath under-
take.

And whan he shulde his levé take
Of a yong daughter which was his,
She wepte, and he what cause it is
Her axeth, and she him answerde,
'That Perse is dede;' and he u
herde

And wondreth what she meneé
wolde.

And she upon childehód him tolde,
That Perse, her litel hounde, is
dede.

With that he pulletli up his hede
And madé right a glad viságe
And said, how it was a preságe
Touchénd unto that other Perse,
Of that Fortúne him shulde adverse.
He saith for suche a prénostike
Most of an hound was to him like,
For as it is an houndés kinde
To berke upon a man behinde,
Right so behinde his brothers bake
With falsé wordés whiche he spake
He hath do slaine, and that is routh.
But he whiche hateth all untrouth
The highé God it shall redresse,
For so my daughter prophetesse
Forth with her litel houndés dethe

Betokeneth; and thus forth he geth
Comfórted of this evidénce
With the Romains in his defence
Ayein the Grekes that ben coménde.
This Perseus, as nought seénde
This mischef which that him
abode,

With all his multitudé rode
And prided him upon this thinge,
Of that he was become a Kinge,
And howe he had his regné gete.
But he hath all the right foryete
Which longeth unto governaunce,
Wherof through Goddés orde-
naunce¹

It felle upon the winter tide
That with his hoste he shuldé ride
Over Danubie thilké flood,
Whiche all befrosé thanné stood
So hardé, that he wendé wele
To passé. But the blindé whele,
Which torneth ofte er men be
ware

Thilke ice which that the horsmen
bare

To-brake, so that a great partie
Was dreint¹ of the chivalérie;
The reréwarde it toke aweie,
Came none of hem to londé drey.²

"Paulus, this worthy knight
Romain,

By his asprie it herdé sain,
And hasteth him all that he may,
So that upon that other day³
He camewhere he this host behelde,
And that was in a largé felde,
Wherin the banners ben displaied.
He hath anone his men arraied,
And whan that he was embatafled
He goth and hath the felde assafléd
And slough and toke all that he
fonde,

Wherof the Macedonie londe

¹ Dreint, drowned.

² Dry land.

³ That other day, the second day.

BOOK II.—ENVY.

Which, through king Alisaundre
honoured

Long timé stood, tho was devoured ;
To Perse and all that infortune
They wité,¹ so that the comúne
Of all the londe his heire exile :
And he dispeired² for the while
Desguisé in a pouer wede
To Romé goth ; and there, for nede,
The craft which thilke timé was
To worche in laton³ and in bras
He lerneth for his sustenaunce.
Such was the sonés purveiaunce.
And of his fader it is saide,
In strong prisón that he was laide
In Albé, where that he was dede
For hunger and defaulte of brede.
The hounde was token and prophcie

That liche an hounde he shuldé deie
Which lich was of conditió
Whan he with his detractiún
Barke on his brother so behinde.

“Lo, what profit a man may finde,
Which hinder woll an other wight,
Forthy with all thin holé might,
My sone, escheué thilké vice.”—

“My fader, ellés were I nice.
For ye therfore so well have spoke,
That it is in min berté loke
And ever shall ; but of Envie,
If there be more in his bailie⁴
Towardés Lové, say me what.”—

“My sone, as guile under the hat
With sleightés of a tregetour⁵
Is hid, Envie of such coloúr
Hath yet the fourthé deceivaunt,
The whiche is clepéd Fals Sem-
blaunt,

Wherof the mater and the forme

Nowe herken, and I thee shall en-
forme.

“*Of fals semblaunt* if I shall
telle

Above all other it is the welles
Out of the which decepté floweth.
There is no man so wise that
knoweth

Of thilké flood whiche is the tide,
Nehowe he shulde him selven guide
To také sauf passagé there.

And yet the wind to mannés ere
Is softe, and as it semeth oute
It maketh clere weder all aboute.
But though it seme, it is nought so.
For Fals Semblaunt hath ever mo
Of his counseil in compaignie
The derke untrewé Ypocrisie
Whose word discórdeth to his
thought.

Forthy they ben to-gider brought
Of one covine, of one houshólde,
As it shall after this be tolde.
Of Fals Semblaunt it nedeth
nought

To telle of olde ensamples ought.
For all day in expérience
A man may see thilke évidence
Of fairé wordés, whiche he hereth,
But yet the barge Envié stereth
And halt¹ it ever fro the londe,
Where Fals Semblaunt with ore in
honde

It roweth and will nought arrive
But let it on the wawés drive
In great tempést and great debate,
Wherof that Love and his estate
Empeireth.² And therfóre I rede,
My soné, that thou fle and drede
This Vice and, what that other sain,
Let thy semblaunt be tiewe and
plein.

For Fals Semblaunt is thilké Vice,
Which never was without office,

¹ And to Perseus they give the blame for all that misfortune.

² *Dispeired*, in despair.

³ *Laton*, latten, brass with an alloy of tin.

⁴ *Bailie*, government.

⁵ *Tregetour*, sleight-of-hand man.

¹ *Halt*, holds. ² *Empeireth*, are impaired.

Where that Envié thenketh to guile
He shall be for that ilké while
Of privé counseil messagére.
For whan his semblaunt is most
clere

Than is he most derke in his
thought;
Though men him se, they knowe
him nought.

But as it sheweth in the glas
Thing which therinné never was,
So sheweth it in his viságe
That never was in his coráge.¹
Thus doth he all his thing by
sleighte.

Now lith thy consciéce in weighte,
My godé sone, and shrive thee
here

If thou were ever custumérc
To Fals Semblaunt in any wise." --

"For ought I can me yet avise,
My godé fader, certes no;
If I for love have ought don so,
Now axeth, I woldé pray you.
For ellés I wot never how
Of Fals Semblaunt that I have
gilt."²—

"My sone, and sithen³ that
thou wilt

That I shall axé, gabbé nought,
But telle if ever was thy thought
With Fals Semblaunt and Cover-
ture

To wite of any creature
How that he was with lové ladde,
So were he sory, were he gladde.
Whan than thou wistest howe it
were,

All that he rounéd⁴ in thin ere
Thou toldest forth in other place

¹ That which never was in the thought of his heart. *Courage* was any feeling from the heart. When the small birds make melody, says Chaucer, 'so pricketh hem Nature in her corages,' that is, they sing with all their hearts.

² *Gilt*, been guilty.

³ *Sithen*, since.

⁴ *Rounéd*, whispered.

To setten him fro Lovés grace
Of what womán that thee best liste,
There as no man his counseil wiste
But thou, by whom he was deceived
Of love, and from his purpose
weived,¹

And thoughtest that his disturb-
aunce

Thin owné causé shuld avaúnce,
As who saith I am so sely.²
There may no mannés priveté
Ben heléd³ half so well as min.
Art thou, my sone, of suche engín?
Tell on."—"My godé fader, nay,
As for the moré part, I saie.

But of somedele I am beknowe⁴
That I may stonde in thilké rowe
Amongés hem that saundres⁵ use.
I woll nought me therof excuse,
That I with such colóur ne steine,
Whan I my besté semblant feigne
To my felów, till that I wote
All his counseil both colde and hote.
For by that cause I make him chere
Till I his lové knowe and here.

And if so be min herté soucheth⁶
That ought unto my lady toucheth
Of lové that he woll me telle,
Anon I renne unto the welle
And casté water in the fire,
So that his cart amid the mire
By that I have his counseil knowe
Full ofté sith⁷ I overthrowe
Whan that heweneth best to stonde.
But this I do you understonde,⁸
If that a man love ellés where,
So that my lady be nought there,
And he me tell, I will it hide,
There shall no worde escape aside.
For with deceipt of no semblaunt

¹ *Weived*, put aside.

² *Sely*, simple.

³ *Heléd*, concealed

⁴ I confess as to some part.

⁵ *Saundres*, sandal wood (as a dye).

⁶ *Soucheth*, suspects.

⁷ *Ofté sith*, oftentimes.

⁸ *Do you*, make you to understand.

To him breke I no covénaunt.
 Me liketh nought in other place
 To letté no man of his grace,
 Ne for to ben inquisitfe
 To knowe an other mannés life,
 Where that he love or lovéd nought
 That toucheth nothing to my
 thought,
 But all it passeth through min ere
 Right as a thing that never were
 And is foryete and laid beside.
 But if it toucheth any side
 My lady, as I have er spoken,
 Min erés ben nought thanné loken.
 For certés whanné that betit,¹
 My will, min herte and all my wit
 Ben fully set to herken and spire.²
 What any man woll speke of hire.
 Thus have I feigné compaignie
 Full ofté for³ I wolde asprie
 What thinge it is that any man
 Tell of my worthy lady can.
 And for two causes I do this.
 The firsté causé wherof is,
 If that I might of herken and seke
 That any man of her misspeke,
 I woll excuse her so fully
 That whan she wist it inderly,⁴
 Min hopé shuldé be the more
 To have her thank for evermore.
 That other cause, I you assure,
 Is, why that I by coverture
 Have feigné semblaunt ofté timé
 To hem that passen all day by me
 And ben lovés als well as I,
 For this I wené truély,
 That there is of hem allé none,
 That they ne loven everychone
 My lady. For sothlich I leve⁵
 And dursté setten it in preve,
 Is none so wise that shulde as-
 terte,⁶

But¹ he were lustles in his herte,
 For why and he my lady sigh,²
 Her visage and her goodlich eye,
 But he her lovéd er he went.
 And for that suche is min entent,
 That is the cause of min asprie,
 Why that I feigné compaignie
 And maké felowe over all,
 For gladly wolde I knowen all
 And holdé me covért alway,
 That I full ofté ye or nay
 Ne list answére in any wise,
 But feignen semblaunt as the wise
 And herken talcs, till I knowe
 My ladies lovers all arowe.
 And whan I here how they have
 wrought,
 I fare as though I herd it nought
 And as I no worde understood.
 But that is nothing for her good,
 For leveth well, the soth is this,
 That whan I knowe all how it is,
 I woll nought furthren hem a lye
 But all the werste I can endite
 I tell it unto my lady plat
 For furthering of min own estate
 And hinder hem all that I may.
 But for all that yet dare I say
 I finde unto my self no bote,
 All though min herté nedés mote,
 Through strength of love, all that
 I here
 Discover unto my lady dere.
 For in good feith I have no might
 To helé³ fro that sweté wight
 If that it toucheth her any thinge.
 But this wote wel the heaven kinge,
 That sithen first the world began
 Unto none other straungé man
 Ne feigné I semblaunt ne chere
 To wite or axe of his matere,
 Though that he lovéd ten or twelve
 Whan it was nought my ladies selve.

¹ *Betit*, betides.² *Spire*, spear, seek narrowly.³ *For*, because.⁵ *Leve*, believe.⁴ *Inderly*, thoroughly.⁶ *Asterte*, escape.¹ *But*, unless.² If he saw my lady.³ *Helé*, conceal.

But if he wold axe any rede
 Alonlich of his owné hede,
 How he with other lové ferde.
 His talés with min eres I herde
 But to min herté came it nought
 Ne sank no deper in my thought,
 But held counseil as I was bede,
 And tolde it never in other stede,¹
 But let it passen as it come.
 Now fader, say, what is thy dome,
 And how thou wolt that I be
 peined²
 For such semblaunt as I have
 feigned."—

"My sone, if reson woll be
 peised,"³

There may no Vertue ben un-
 preised

Ne Vicé none be set in prise.
 Forthy, my sone, if thou be wise
 Do no visér upon thy face
 Which woldé nought thin hert
 embrace.

For if thou do, within a throwe
 To other men it shall be knowe,
 So might thou lightly fall in blame
 And lese a great part of thy name.
 And nethéles in this degré
 Full ofté timé thou might se
 Of suché men as now a day
 This Vicé setten in assay,
 I speke it for no mannes blame
 But for to warné thee the same.
 My sone, as I may heré talke
 In every placé where I walke,
 I not⁴ if it be so or none
 But it is many daiés gone
 That I first herdé tellé this,
 How Fals Semblaunt hath be and is
 Most comunly from yere to yere
 With hem that dwelle among us
 here

Of suche as we Lombardés calle.

For they ben the sliést of alle
 So as men sain in towne about
 To feigne and sheué thing without
 Whiche is revers to that withinne,
 Wherof that they full ofté winne
 Whan they by reson shuldé lese.
 They ben the last, and yet they
 chese,

And we the firste, and yet behinde
 We gone there as we shulden finde
 The profit of our owné londe,
 Thus gone they free withouten
 bonde

To done her profit all at large,
 And other men bere all the charge.
 Of Lombardes unto this covine
 Whiche allé londés conne engine¹
 May Fals Semblaunt in especiáll
 Be likened, for they over all
 Where that they thenken for to
 dwelle,

Among hem self, so as they telle,
 First ben enforméd for to lere²
 A craft which cleped is Facrere.³
 For if Facreré come about
 Than afterward hem stant no doubt
 To voidé with a subtil honde
 The besté goodés of the londe,
 And bringé chaffe and také corne.
 Where as Facreré goth beforne
 In all his waie he fint no lette,
 That doré can none ussher shette,
 In whiche he list to take entré.
 And thus the counseil most secré
 Of every thing Facreré knoweth
 Whiche into straungé place he
 bloweth

Where as he wote⁴ it may most
 greve.

And thus Facreré maketh beleve.
 So that full ofte he hath deceived
 Er that he may ben apperceived.

¹ To this secret contrivance of the Lombards,
 who can outwit all nations.

² Lere, learn

³ Facrere, dissimulation.

⁴ Wote, knows.

¹ Stede, place. ² Peined, put to penance.

³ Peised, weighed. ⁴ Not, know not.

Thus is this Vicé for to drede,
For who these oldé bokés rede
Of suche ensamples as were er,
Him ouglté be the moré ware
Of allé tho that feigné chere,
Wherof thou shalte a talé here.

“**Of fals semblaunt** whiche is
beleved,

Ful many a worthy wight is greved
And was long time or¹ we were
boë.

To thee, my sone, I will therfore
A talé tell of Fals Semblaunt
Which falseth many a covaunnt
And many a fraude of fals counsél
There ben hangénd upon his sail.
And that aboughten giltéles
Both Deianire and Hercules,
The whiche in great disesé fell
Through Fals Semblaunt, as I shall
tell.

“Whan Hercules within a throwe
All only hath his herté throwe
Upon this fairé Deianire,
It fell him on a day desire,
Upon a river as he stood,
That passe he wolde over the flood
Withouté bote and with him lede
His lové, but he was in drede
For tendresse of that sweté wight,
For he knewe nought the foïde
aright.

There was a geaunt thanné nigh,
Which Nessus hight, and whan he
sigh

This Hercules and Deianire,
Within his herte he gan conspire
As he which through his trecherie
Hath Hercules in great envie,
Whiche he bare in his herté loke,
And than he thought it shall be
wroke.

But he ne dursté nethéles
Ayein this worthie Hercules

Fall in debate as for to feight,
But feigned semblaunt all by sleight
Of frendship and of allé good,
And cometh where as they both
stood

And maketh hem all the chere he can
And saith, that as her¹ owné man
He is all redy for to do

What thinge he may ; and it fel so,
That they upon this semblaunt
triste²

And axen him, if that he wiste
What thinge hem weré best to done,
So that they mighten sauf and sone
The water passé, he and she.
And whan Nessús the priveté
Knew of her herté what it ment,
As he that was of double entent
He made hem right a glad viságe.
And whan he herde of the passáge
Of him and her, he thoughté guile
And feigneth semblant for a while
Todone hem plesaunce and servise,
But he thought all an other wise.

“This Nessus with his wordés
sligh

Yaf such counsail to-fore her eye,
Which semeth outward profitáble
And was withinné déceiváble.
He bad hem of the stremés depe
That they beware and také kepe,
So as they knowé nought the pas.
But for to helpe in suche a cas
He saith him self, that for her ese
He wolde, if that it mighte hem
plese,

The passage of the water take
And for this lady undertake
To bere her to that other stronde
And sauf to set her up a londé,
And Hercules may than also
The waie knowe, how he shall go
And herto they accorden all.
But what as after shall befall

¹ Or, ere.

¹ Her, their.

² Triste, trust.

Well paid was Hercules of this.
 And this geaunt also glad is
 And toke this lady up alofte
 And set her on his shulder softe
 And in the flood began to wade
 As he which no grucchingé made,
 And bare her over sauf and sounde.
 But whan he stood on drié grounde
 And Hercules was fer behinde,
 He set his trowth all out of minde,
 Who so therof be lefe or loth
 With Deianiré forth he goth,
 As he that thoughté to dissever
 The compaignie of hem for ever.
 Whan Hercules therof toke hede.
 As faste as ever he might him spede
 He hiéth after in a throwe.
 And hapneth that he had a bowe,
 The whiche in allé hast he bende,
 As he that wolde an arwé sende,
 Whiche he to-fore had envenímed.
 He hath so well his shotté timed,
 That he him through the body
 smette

And thus the falsé wight he lette.¹
 But list now, suche a felonie.
 Whan Nessus wist he shuldé deie,
 He toke to Deianire his sherte,
 Which with the blood was of his
 herte

Through out disteignéd over all,
 And tolde how she it kepé shall
 And prívély to this entent,
 That if her lorde his herté went
 To love in any other place,
 This shert, he saith, hath suche a
 grace,

That if she may so mochel make
 That he the sherte upon him take,
 He shall all other lette in veine
 And torne unto her love ayeine.

"Who was so glad but Deianire?
 Her thought her herte was on a
 fire,

¹ *Lette*, delayed, stopped.

Till it was in her cofre loke,
 So that no word therof was spoke.

"The daíes gone, the yeréspasse,
 The hertés waxen lasse and lasse
 Of hem that ben to love untrewé.
 This Hercules with herté newe
 His love hath set on Eolen,
 And therof speken allé men.
 This Eolen, this fairé maide
 Was as men thilké timé saide
 The kingés daughter of Eurice.
 And she made Hercules so nice
 Upon her love and so assote,¹
 That he him clotheth in her cote,
 And she in his was clothéd ofte,
 And thus feblésse is set alofte
 And strengthé was put under fote.
 There can no man therof do bote.
 Whan Deianire hath herd this
 speche,

There was no sorwe for to seche,
 Of other helpé wot she none
 But goth unto her cofre anone,
 With wepend eye and wofull herte
 She toke out thilke unhappy sherte,
 As she that wendé wel to do,
 And brought her werke abouté so,
 That Hercules this shert on dede
 To suche entent as she was
 bede

Of Nessus, so as I said er.
 But therof was she nought the ner,
 As no fortuné may be weived,
 With Fals Semblant she was de-
 ceived.

But whan she wendé best have
 wonne,

She lost all that she hath begonne.
 For thilké shert unto the bone
 His body sette a fire anone
 And clevehth so it may nought
 twinne²

For the venim, that was therinne.

¹ *Assote*, made to dote.

² *Twinne*, be separated.

And he than as a wildé man
Unto the highé wode he ran,
And as the clerke Ovidé telleth,
The greté trees to grounde he
felleth

With strengthe al of his owné might
And made an hughé fire upright
And lept therin him self at ones
And brent him self both flessch and
bones ;

Which *thingé cam through Fals
Semblaunt

That falsé Nessus the geaunt
Made unto him and to his wife,
Wherof that he hath lost his life,
And she sory for evermo.

"Forthy my sone, er thee be wo
I redé be wel ware therfore.
For whan so great a man was lore,¹
It ought to yive a great concept
To warne all other of such de-
ceipt."--

"Graunt mercy, fader; I am ware
So fer, that I no moré dare
Of Fals Semblaunt take ácqueint-
aunce,

But rather I wol do penaunce,
That I have feigné chere er this.
Now axeth forth, what so there is
Of that belongeth to my shrifte."--

"My soné, yet there is the fite,
Whiche is conceivé of envie
And clepéd is supplantarie,
Through whos compassément and
guile

Ful many a man hath lost his while
In love as wel as other wise,
Here after as I shall devise.

The Pice of Supplantación
With many a fals collación
Whiche he conspireth all unknowe,
Full ofté time hath overthrowe
The worship of another man.
So wel no life awaité can

Ayein his sleighté for to caste,
That he his purpose atté laste
Ne hath, er that it be withset.¹
But most of all his hert is set
In court upon these great offices
Of dignités and benefices.
Thus goth he with his sleighte
about

To hinder and shove another out
And stonden with his sligh compás
In stedé there another was,
And so to set him selven inne.
He recheth nought be so he winne
Of that another man shall lese,
And thus full ofté chalk for chese
He chaungeth with full litel coste,
Wherof another hath the loste
And he the profit shall receive.
For his Fortune is to deceive
And for to chaunge upon the whele
His wo with other mennés welc;
Of that another man availeth
His own estate thus he up hailleth
And taketh the brid to his beyete,²
Where other men the bussches bete.
My sone, and in the samé wise
There ben lovér's of suche emprise,
That shapen hem to be relieved
Where it is wronge to ben acheved,
For it is other mannés right
Whiche he hath taken, day and
night,

To kepé for his owné store,
Toward him self for evermore
And is his proper³ by the lawe,
Which thing that axeth no felawe.
If Lové holde his covenaut.
But they that worchen by supplant,
Yet wolden they a man supplant
And take a part of thilké plant,
Whiche he hath for him selvé set.
And so ful ofte is all unknet

¹ *Withset*, upset.

² Takes the bird for his own profit.

³ *Proper*, property.

¹ *Lore*, lost.

That some man weneth be right
faste.

For Súpllaunt with his slié caste
Full ofté happeneth for to mowe
Thing which another man hath
sowe,

And maketh común of propreté
With sleighte and with subtilité,
As men may sen from yere to yere.
Thus claimeth he the bote to sterc
Of whiche another maister is.

"Forth; my sone, if thou er this
Hast ben of such professión,
Discover thy confessión.

Hast thou supplanted any man?"—

"For ought that I you tellé can,
Min holy fader, as of dede
I am withouten any drede
And giltéles but of my thought,
My consciéce excuse I nought.
For were it wronge or were it right,
Me lacketh no thingé but might
That I ne woldé longe er this
Of other mannés love iwis¹

By way of súpllantatiön
Have made appropriation
And holde that I never bought,
Though it another man forthought.²
And all this speke I but of one,
For whom I let all other gone.
But her I may nought overpasse
That I ne mote alway compásse,
Me rought nought by what quemin-
tise,³

So that I might in any wise
Fro suché that my lady serve,
Her herté maké for to swerve
Withouten any part of love.
For by the goddé's aile above
I wolde it mighté so befallé,
That I aloné shuld hem alle
Supplant and welde her at my wille.
And that thing may I nought fulfille,

But if I shuldé strengthé make.
And that I dare nought undertake
Though I were as was Alisaunder,
For therof might arise a sclaunder.
And certés that shall I do never,
For in good feith yet had I lever
In my simplessé for to deie,
Than worché such supplantarie.
Of other wise I woll nought say
That, if I founde a siker way,
I wolde as for conclusion .
Worche after supplantacion
So highe a lové for to winne.
Now fader, if that this be sinne,
I am all redy to redresse
Thegilt, of whiche I me confesse."—

"My godé sone, as of Supplant
Thee theré nought drede *tant ne*
quant

As for no thing that I have herde,
But only that thou haste misferde
Thenkend, and that me liketh
nought,

For God beholt¹ a mannes thought.
And if thou understood in soth
In Lovés causé what it doth
A man to ben a supplantoúr,
Thou woldest for thin own honoúr
By double waié také kepe.

"First for thin own estatetokepe,
To be thy self so well bethought
That thou supplanted weré nought.
And eke for worship of thy name
Towardés other do the same
And suffre every man have his.
But nethéles it was and is
That in awaite² at all assaies
Supplant of love is in our waies ;
The lief full ofté for the lever
Forsaketh,³ and so it hath done
ever.

Ensamble I finde therupon,
At Troie how that Agámemnón

¹ *Iwis*, certainly.

² *Forthought*, grieved.

³ I should not care by what ingenious device

¹ *Beholt*, beholds,

² *Awaite*, watch

³ Leaves the loved for the more loved.

Supplanted hath the worthy knight
 Achilles for that sweté wight,
 Which naméd was Brisseida;
 And also of Criseida,
 Whom Troilus to lové ches,¹
 Supplanted hath Diómedés.

Of Geta and Amphitrióné,
 That whilom weré both as one
 Of frendship and of compaignie,
 I rede how that Supplantarie
 In Love, as it betidé tho,
 Beguiled hath one of hem two.
 For this Getá, that I of mene,
 To whom the lusty faire Alcmene
 Assuré was by way of Love,
 Whan he best wende have ben above
 And sikerest of that he hadde,
 Cupido so the causé ladde,
 That while he was out of the way,
 Amphitrión her love away
 Hath take, and in this forme he
 wrought.

By night unto the chambre he
 sought

Where that she lay, and with a wile
 He counterfeteth for the while
 The vois of Get in suche a wise,
 That made her of her bedde arise
 Wenéndé, that it weré he,
 She wendé, that it weré soth.
 Lo, what supplant of Lové doth.
 This Geta forth bejapéd went,
 And yet ne wist he what it ment.
 Amphitrión him hath supplanted
 With sleight of love and her en-
 chaunted,

And thus put every man out other.
 The ship of Love hath lost his rother,
 So that he can no reson sterc,
 And for to speke of this matere
 Touchendé Love and his supplaunt
 A talé, whiche is accordaúnt,
 Unto thin ere I thenke enforme.
 Now herken, for this is the forme.

¹ *Ches*, chose.

“*Of thiske citee* chese of alle,
 Which men the noble Romé calle,
 Er it was set to Cristés feith,
 There was, as the croniqué saith,
 An emperour, the whiche it ladde
 In pees, that he no werrés hadde.
 There was no thing disóbeisaúnt,
 Which was to Rome appertenaúnt,
 But all was tornéd into rest.
 To some it thought hem for the
 best,

To some it thought nothingé so.
 And that was only unto tho
 Whose herté stood upon knighthode.
 But most of allé his manhode
 The worthy sone of thempérou,
 Which woldé ben a werriour,
 As he that was chivalerous,
 Of worldés fame and desirous,
 Began his fader to besече,
 That he the werrés mighté seche
 In straungé marchés for to ride.
 His fader saide he shulde abide
 And woldé graunté him no leve.
 But he, which woldé nought be-
 leve,¹

A knight of his to whom he trist,
 So that his fader nothing wist,
 He toke and tolde him his corage,²
 That he purpóseth a viage,
 If that Fortúné with him stonde.
 He said how that he woldé fonde³
 The Greté See⁴ to passe unknowe
 And there abidé for a throwe⁵
 Upon the werrés to travaile.
 And to this point withouté faile
 This knight, whan he hath herde
 his lorde,

Is swore and stant of his accorde.
 And they that bothé yongé were,
 So that in privé counseil there

¹ *Beleve*, remain.

² *His corage*, the thought of his heart.

³ *Fonde*, try.

⁴ *Greté See*, Mediterranean.

⁵ *For a throwe*, for a time

They ben assented for to wende;
And therupon to make an ende
Tresúre inough with hem they
token.

And whan the time is best they
loken

That sodeinlich in a galeic
Fro Romé-lond they went their waie
And lond upon that other side.

"The worldé fell so thilké tide,
Whiche ever his happés hath
divérse,

The greté Souldan than of Perse
Ayein the Caliphe of Egípte
A werié, which that him beclipte,¹
Hath in a marché costeaúnt.²

And he, which was a pursuivaunt
Worship of armés to atteigne,
This Romain, let anon ordeigne
That he was redy every dele.

And whan he was arraiéd wele
Of every thing which him be-
longeth,

Straught unto Kaire his wey he
fongeth,³

Wher he the Souldan thanné fonde
And axeth that within his londe
He might him for the werré serve
As he which woll his thank deserve.
The Souldan was right glad withall
And well the more in speciáll,
Whan that he wist he was Romain.

But what was ellés incertaín
That might he wité by no way.
And thus the knight of whom I say
Toward the Souldan is belefte
And in the marches now and efté,
Where that the dedly werrés were,
He wroughté such knighthodé
there,

That every man spake of him good.

"And thilké timé so it stood,

This mighty Souldan by his wife
A doughter hath, that in this life
Men saidé there was none so faire;
She shuldé ben her faders heire,
And was of yerés ripe inough,
Her beauté many an herté drough
To bowen to that ilké lawe,
Fro which no life may be with-
drawe.

And that is Lové, whose natúre
Set life and deth in a ventúre
Of hem that knighthode undertake.
This lusty peine hath overtake
The hert of this Romaín so sore,
That to knighthodé more and more
Prowésse ávaunteth his coráge.
Lich to the leon in his rage,
Fro whom that alle bestés fle;
Such was this knight in his degre,
Where he was arméd in the felde,
Ther dursté none abide his shelde.
Great price¹ upon the werre he
hadde.

"But she, whiche all the chauncé
ladde,

Fortúné shope the marchés so,
That by thassent of bothé two
The Souldan and the Caliphe eke
Bataile upon a day they seke,
Which was in suche a wisé set,
That lenger shulde it nought be let.
They made hem stronge on every
side,

And whan it drough toward the tide,
That the batailé shuldé be,
The Souldan in great priveté
A gold ringe of his doughter toke
And made her swere upon a boke
And eke upon the goddés all,
That if fortuné so befall
In the batailé that he deie,—
That she shall thilké man obeie
And take him to her husebonde,
Which thilké samé ring to honde

¹ *Beclipte*, surrounded.

² *Marché costeaúnt*, border country.

³ *Fongeth*, takes.

¹ *Price*, praise.

Her shuldé bringe after his deth.

"This hath she swore, and forth
he geth

With all the power of his londe
Unto the marché, where he fonde
His enemy full embatailed.
The Souldan hath the feld assailed.
They that ben hardy sone assem-
blen,

Wherof the dredfull hertés trem-
blen:

That one sleeth, and that other
sterveth,¹

But above all his prise deserveth
This knightly Romain; where he
rode

His dedly swerd no man abode,
Aycin the which was no defence,
Egipté fledde in his présence,
And they of Perse upon the chace
Pursuen, but I not² what grace
Befell, an arwe out of a bowe
All sodeinly within a throwe
The Souldan smote, and there he
lay.

The chas is left for thilké day,
And he was bore into a tent.
The Souldan sigh how that it went,
And that he shulde alगतé deie.
And to this knight of Romainie,
As unto him whome he most triste,
His daughters ring, that none it
wiste,

He toke and tolde him all the cas,
Upon her othe what token it was
Of that she shuldé ben his wife.
Whan this was said, the hertés life
Of this Souldán departeth sone.
And therupon, as was to done,
The dedé body well and faire
They carry till they come at Kaire,
There he was worthely begrave.

"The lordés, whiche as wolden
save

The regné, which was desolate,
To bringe it into good estate
A parlément they set anone.
Now herken what fell therupon.
This yougé lord, this worthy knight
Of Rome upon the samé night
That they a morwe treté sholde,
Unto his bacheler he tolde
His counseil, and the ring with al
He sheweth, through which that he
shall,

He saith, the kingés doughter
wedde,

For so the ring was leid to wedde,¹
He tolde, into her faders honde,
That with what man that she it
fonde

She shulde him take unto her lorde.
'And thus,' he saith, 'stant of re-
corde.

But no man wot who hath this
ring.'

This bacheler upon this thing
His ere and his ententé laid
And thoughté moré than he said;
And feigneth with a fals viságe,
That he was glad, but his coráge
Was all set in another wise.
These oldé philosóphres wise
They writen upon thilké while,
That he may best a man beguile
In whom the man hath most
credence.

And this befell in evidunce
Toward this yongé lord of Rome.
His bacheler, which haddé come
Whan that his lord by nighté
slepte,

This ring, the which his maister
kepte,

Out of his purs away he dede
And put another in the stede.

"A morwe whan the court is set
The yongé lady was forth fet,

¹ *Sterveth*, dies. ² *Not*, know not (ne wot).

¹ *To wedde*, as pledge.

To whom the lordés done homáge,
 And after that of mariáge
 They treten and axen of her wille.
 But she, which thoughté to fulfille
 Her faders hest in this matére,
 Said openly, that men may here,
 The chargé whiche her fader bad.
 Tho was this lorde of Romé glad
 And drough toward his purs anone,
 But all for nought, it was agone.
 His bachelor it hath forth drawe
 And axeth therupon the lawe,
 That she him holdé covenaut.
 The token was so suffisaúnt,
 That it ne mighté be forsake.
 And nethéles his lorde hath take
 Quaréle ayein his owné man,
 But for no thing that ever he can
 He might as thanné nought be
 herde,

So that his claime is unanswérde,
 And he hath of his purpos failed.

“This bachelor was tho coun-
 seiled

And wedded and of thilke empire
 He was corouñéd lord and sire,
 And all the lond him hath re-
 ceived ;

Wherof his lord, which was de-
 ceived,

A siknesse er the thriddé morwe
 Conceivé hath of dedly sorwe.
 And as he lay upon his deth,
 There while him lasteth speche
 • and breti

He sendé for the worthiest
 Of all the londe and eke the best
 And tolde hem all the sothé tho,
 That he was sone and heire also
 Of themperour of greté Rome,
 And how that they to-gider come,
 This knight and he, right as it was
 He tolde hem all the pleiné cas.
 And for that he his conseil tolde,
 That other hath all that he wolde

And he hath failéd of his mede.
 As for the good he taketh none hede
 He saith, but only of the love,
 Of which he wend have ben above.
 And therupon by letter write
 He doth his fader for to wite
 Of all the mater how it stode.
 And thanné with an hertely mode
 Unto the lordés he besought
 To tell his lady howe he bought
 Her love, of whiche another glad-
 deth.

And with that worde his hewéfadeth
 And saide: ‘a dieu my lady swete.’
 The life hath lost his kindly hete,
 And he lay dede as any stone,
 Wherof was sory many one,
 But none of allé so as she.

“This falsé knight in his degre
 Arested was and put in holde.
 For openly whan it was tolde
 Of the tresón, whiche is befallé,
 Throughout the lond they saiden
 alle,

If it be soth that men suppose
 His owneuntrouth him shall depose.
 And for to seche an evidence
 With honour and great reverence,
 Wherof they mighté knowe an ende,
 To themperour anon they sende
 The letter whiche his soné wrote.
 And whan that he the sothé wote,
 To tell his sorwe is endéles ;
 But yet in hasté nethéles
 Upon the talé whiche he herde,
 His steward into Persé ferde
 With many a worthy Romain eke
 His legé tretour¹ for to seke.
 And whan they thider comé were,
 This knight him hath confesséd
 there,

How falsly that he hath him bore,
 Wherof his worthy lord was lore.²

¹ *His legé tretour*, his traitorous liegeman.

² *Lore*, lost.

"Tho saiden some he shuldé
deie,

But yet they founden such a weie,
That he shall nought be dede in
Perse,

And thus the skillés ben diverse.
By causé that he was coróned,
Of that the lond was abandóned
To him, all though it were unright,
There is no peiné for him dight,
But to this point and to this ende
They graunten wel, that he shall
wende

With the Romaíns to Rome ayein.
And thus accorded full and plein
The quické body with the dede
With levé také¹ forth they lede,
Where that supplant hath his juise.²
Wherof that thou thee might avise
Upon this enformaciön
Touchend of Supplantaciön,
That thou, my soné, do nought so
And for to také hede also
What Súplant doth in other halve,
There is no man can finde a salve.
Picinly to helen suche a sore.

It hath and shall ben evermore,
Whan Pride is with Envié joint,
He suffreth no man in good point,
Where that he may his honour let.
And therupon if I shall set
Ensamplé, in holy chirche I finde
How that Supplant is nought be-
hinde.

God wote, if that it now be so.
For in croníque of time ago
I finde a talé concordáble
Of Supplant, which that is no fable,
In the manér as I shall telle
So as whilóm the thingés felle.

At Rome as it hath ofté falle
The Viker Generall of alle
Of hem that leven Cristés feith

His lasté day,—which none with-
saith,—

Hath shette as to the worldes eye ;
Whos name, if I shall specifie,
He highté Popé Nicholas.

And thus whan that he passéd was,
The Cardinals, that wolden save
The forme of lawe in the conclave,
Gon for to chese a newé Pope,
And after that they couthe agrope
Hath eche of hem said his entent.
Til atté lasté they assent

Upon an holy clerk recluse,
Which full was of gostly vertuse.
His paciéce and his simplesse
Hath set him into highe noblesse.
Thus was he Popé canonised
With great honoür and intronised.
And upon chauce, as it is falle,
His namé Celestin men calle ;
Which notifiéd was by bulle
To holy chirche, and to the fulle
In allé londés magnified.

But every worship is envied,
And that was thilké timé sene.
For whan this Pope, of whome I
mene,

Was chose and other set beside,
A Cardinal was thilké tide,
Which the papate long hath desired
And therupon gretely conspired.
But whan he sigh fortune is failed,
For which long time he hath tra-
vailed,

That ilké fire whiche Ethna bren-
neth

Throughouthis wofull hertérenneth,
Whiche is resembled to Envie,
Wherof Supplant and Trecheie
Engendred is. And nethéles
He feigneth love, he feigneth pees.
Outward he doth the reverence,
But all within his consciéce
Through fals ymaginaciön
He thoughté Supplantaciön.

¹ *Levé také*, leave taken.

² *Juise* (judicium), judgment.

And therupon a wonder wile
He wroughté. For at thilké while
It fel so, that of his lignáge
He hadde a clergeon of yonge age,
Whom he hath in his chambre
affaited.¹

"This Cardinal his time hath
waited

And with his wordés sly and queint,
The whiche he couthé wisely peint,
Hé shope this clerke, of whiche I
telle,

Toward the Popé for to dwelle,
So that within his chamber a night
He lay, and was a privé wight
Toward the Pope on nightés tide;
May no man fle that shall betide.

"This Cardinal, which thoughté
guile,

Upon a day, whan he hath while,
This yongé clerke unto him toke
And made him swere upon a boke
And tolde him what his willé was.
And forth with al a trompe of bras
He hath him take and bad him
this :

'Thou shalt,' he saidé, 'whan
time is

Awaite and také right good kepe,
Whan that the Pope is fast aslepe
And that none other man be nigh.
And thanné that thou be so sligh
Through out the trompe into his
ere,

Fro heven as though a vois it were,
To souné of such prolaciôn,
That he his meditaciôn
Therof may take, and understonde
As though it were of Goddés sonde.
And in this wisé thou shalt say,
That he do thilk estate away
Of Pope, of whiche he stant hon-
oured,

So shall his soulé be socoured

¹ *Affaited*, adapted to his purpose.

Of thilké worship atté last
In heven which shall ever last.'

"This clerk, whan he hath herd
the form,

How he the Popé shuld enform,
Toke of the Cardinal his leve
And goth him home, till it was eve.
And privély the trompe he hedde,
Til that the Popé was a bedde.
And at the midnight, whan he
knewe

The Popé slepté, than he blewe
Within his trompé through the wall
And tolde, in what manér he shall
His Papacé leve, and take
His firste estate. And thus awake
This holy Pope he madé thries,
Wherof diversé fantasies

Upon his greté holinésse
Within his hert he gan impressé.

The Popé full of innocéce
Conceiveth in his consciéce
That it is Goddés wil he cesse.¹

But in what wise he may relese
His highe estate, that vowe he
nought.

And thus within him selfe be
thought,

He bare it stille in his memoire,
Till he cam to the consistoire,
And there in presence of hem alle
He axeth if it so befallé,
That any Popé cessé wolde,
How that the lawe it suffré sholde.
They seten allé stille and herde,
Was none, which to the point
answerde;

For to what purpos that it ment
There was no man knew his en-
tent

But only he which shope the guile.

"This Cardinal the samé while
All openly with wordés pleine
Saith if the Popé woll ordeigne,

¹ *Cesse*, abdicate.

That there be suche a lawé wrought,
Than might he cesse, and elles
nought.

"And as he saidé,* done it was.
The Pope anone upon the cas
Of his papáll auctorité
Hath made and yové the decreté.
And whan the lawé was confermed
In due forme and all affermed,
This innocent which was deceived
His papacie anone hath weived,¹
Renouncéd and resignéd eke.
That other was no thing to seke,
But undernethé suche a jape
He hath so for him selfé shape,
That how as ever it him beseme
The mitre with the diademe
He hath through Supplantaciön
And in his confirmaciön,
Upon the fortune of his grace,
His name was clepéd Boneface.

"Under the visér of Envie,
Lo, thus was hid the trecherie
Whiche hath beguiléd many one.
But such counseil theremay be norté
Which treson, whan it is conspired,
That it nis lich the sparké fired
Up in the roof, which for a throwe
Lith hid til, whan the windés blowe,
It blaseth out on every side.

This Boneface, which can nought
hide

The trecherie of his supplaunt,
Hath openly made his avaunt,
How he the papacie hath wonne.
But thing which is with wrong be-
gonne

May never stondé wel at ende.
Where Pridé shall the bowé bende,
He shet² ful oft out of the way.
And thus the Pope, of whom I say,
Whan that he stood on high the
whele,

¹ *Weived*, put aside.

² *Shet*, shoots.

He can nought suffre himself be
wele.

Envië, whiche is lovéles,
And Pridé, whiche is lawéles,
With such tempésté made him erre,
That charité goth out of herre.¹
So that upon misgovernance
Ayein Lewfis the King of Fraunce
He toké quarell of his outrage
And said, he shuldé don homáge
Unto the chirké bodély.

But he, that wist no thingé why
He shuldé do so great servíce
After the worlde in suche a wise,
Withstood the wrong of that
demaunde,

For nought the Popé may com-
maunde

The King woll nought the Pope
obeie.

This Popé tho by allé weie
That he may worche of violéce,
Hath sent the bulle of his sentence
With cursinge and with enterdite.
The king upon this wrongfull plite
To kepe his regné from serváge,
Counseiléd was of his barnáge,²
That might with might shall be
withstond.

Thus was the causé tak on hond,
And saiden, that the papacie
They wolden honouér and magnífie
In all that ever is spirituáll,
But thilké Pridé temporáll
Of Boneface in his persone
Ayein that ilké wronge alóne
They woldé stonden in debate,
And thus the man and nought the
state

The Frensshé shopen by her might
To greve. And fel there was a
knight

Sire Guilliam de Langharet,
Which was upon this causé set.

¹ Goes off its hinges. ² *Barnage*, baronage.

And therupon he toke a route
Of men of armés and rode oute,
So longe and ¹ in awaite he lay,
That he aspid upon a day
The Popé was at Avinon
And shuldé ride out of the town
Unto Pontsorgé, the whiche is
A castell in Provence of his.
Upon the way and as he rode,
This knight, whiche hovéd and
abode

Embusidné upon horsébake,
All sodeinlich upon him brake
And hath him by the bridell sesed
And said: 'O thou, which last
disced
The courte of Frauncé by thy
wronge,
Now shalt thou singe an other
songe.

Thin enterdite and thy senténc
Ayein thin owné consciénc
Hereafter thou shalt fele and grope.
We pleigné nought ayein the Pope,
For thilké name is honouráble,
But thou, whiche hast be deceiváble
And trecherous in all thy werke,
Thou Boneface, and proudé clerke,
Misleder of the papacie,
Thy falsé body shall abie ²
And suffre, that it hath deserved.'

"Lo, thus this supplantór was
served.

For they him laáden into Fraunce
And setten him to his penáunce
Within a toure in hardé bondes,
Where he for hunger both his
hondes
Ete of and diéd, God wote how.

¹ *So longe and*, and so long. This way of placing "and" occurs frequently throughout the poem. Here it recurs six lines lower down.

² *Abie*. "Abye" means buy, that is, "pay for." "Abide" would mean "wait for," as this knight "hovéd" (hovered about a spot) and abode, waited for, Pope Boniface.

Of whome the writinge is yet now
Registred as a man may here,
Which speketh and saith in this
maner :

'Thin entré lich a fox was sligh,
Thy regne also with pride on high
Was lich the leon in his rage,
But atté laste of thy passáge
Thy deth was to the houndés like.'

"Suche is the letter of his cro-
nique

Proclaméd in the court of Rome,
Wherof the wise ensample nome.¹
And yet as ferforth as I dare,
I rede all óther men beware
And that they loké well algate,
That none his owne estate translate
Of holy chirche in no degre
By fraudé ne by subtilté.
For thilke honoúr whiche Aaron
toke

Shall none receive as saith the boke,
But he be clepéd,² as he was.
What shall I thenken in this cas
Of that I heré nowé a day?
I not,³ but he which can and may
By reson both and by natúre
The helpe of every mannés cure
He kepé Simon fro the folde.

"For Joachim, thilke abbottolde,
How suché daiés shulden falle,
That comunlich in places alle
The chapmen of such mercerie
With fraude and with supplantarie
So many shulden beie and selle,
That he ne may for shamé telle
So foule a sinne in mannés ere.
But God forbedé that it were
In ouré daiés, that he saith.
For if the clerk beware ⁴ his faith
In chapmanhode at suche a faire
The remenaunt mot nede empeire ⁵

¹ *Nome*, took.

² *But he be clepéd*, unless he be called.

³ *Not*, know not.

⁴ *Beware*, barter.

⁵ *Empeire*, grow worse.

Of all that to the world belongeth,
For whan that holy chirché wrong-
eth,

I not what other thing shall righte.
And nethéles at mannés sighte
Envie for to be preferred
Hath consciéncé so differred,
That no man loketh to the Vice
Whiche is the moder of malíce,
And that is thilké fals Envie,
Which causeth many a trecherie.
For where he may another se
That is more gracioús than he,
It shall nought stonden in his might
But if he hinder suc¹fe a wight.
And that is well nigh over all
This Vice is now so generall.

"Envie thilke unhap indrough,
Whan Joab by decepté slough
Abner, for drede he shuldé be
With king David such as was he.

"And through Envie also it felle
Of thilké fals Achitofelle,
For his counseil was nought
acheved

But that he sigh Cusy beleved
With Absolon and him forsake,
He henge him selfe upon a stake.

"Senec witnésseth openly,
How that Envie properly
Is of the Court the comun wenche.
And halt taverné for to schenche¹
That drink which maketh the herté
brenne,

And doth² the wit abouté renne
By every waie to compásse
How that he might all other passe,
As he which through unkindéship
Envieeth every felaship.
So that thou might well knowe and
se,

There is no Vicé suche as he
First toward God abhomináble
And to mankinde unprofitáble.

¹ *Schenche*, pour out.

² *Doth*, causes.

And that by wordés but a fewe
I shall by reson prove and shewe.

"Envie if that I shall describe,
He is nought shaply for to wive
In erth among the women here.
For there is in him no matere
Wherof he mighté do plesaunce.
First for his hevvy contenaunce
Of that he semeth ever unglad
He is nought able to be hadde,
And eke he brenneth so withinne,
That kindé may no profit winne,
Wherof he shulde his lové plesé.
For thilké blood, which shuld have
ese

To regne among the moisté veines,
Is drie of thilke unkindly peines
Through which Envie is fired ay.
And this by reson prove I may,
That toward Love Envie is nought;
And other wise if it be sought,
Upon what side as ever it falle
It is the wersté Vice of alle,
Which of him self hath most malíce.
For understand that every Vice
Some causé hath wherof it groweth.
But of Envie no man knoweth
Fro whenne he cam, but out of
helle.

For thus the wisé clerkés telle,
That no spirít but of malíce
By way of kinde upon a Vice
Is tempted, and by such a way
Envie hath kindé¹ put away
And of malíce hath his steríng,
Wherof he maketh his bákbítíng,
And is him self therof disesed;
So may there be no kindé plesed.
For ay the more that he envieth,
The more ayein him self he phleth.
Thus stant Envie in good espeire
To ben him self the divels heire
As he whiche is his nexté liche
And furthest from the heven riche.

¹ *Kindé*, nature.

For theré may he never wone.¹

"Forthý my godé deré sone,
If thou wolt finde a siker way
To lové, put Envíe away."—

"Min holy fader, reson wolde,
That I this Vice escheué sholde,
But yet to strengthen my coráge
If that ye wolde in avauntáge
Therof set a recoverir,
It were to me a great desir,
That I this Vicé mighté flee."—

"Now understand, my sone, and
see,

There is phisiqué for the seke
And Vertues for the Vices eke.
Who that the Vices wolde escheue,
He mot by reson thanné sue.²
The Vertues. For by thilké way
He may the Vices done away;
Forthey to-gider may nought dwelle.
For as the water of the wellle
Of fire abateth the malíce,
Right so Vertu fordeth the Vice.

"Ayein Envíe is Charité,
Whiche is the moder of pité,
That maketh a mannés herté tender,
That it may no malíce engender
In him that is inclined therto.
For his coráge is tempred so,
That though he might him self
releve

Yet wolde he nought another greve,
But rather for to do plesaunce
He bereth him selven the gre-
vaunce,

So fain he wolde another ese.
Wherof, my soné, for thin ese
Now herken a talé, whiche I rede,³
And understonde it well I rede.⁴

"Among the bokés of Latín
I finde it writ of Constantín,
The worthy emperour of Rome.
Such infortúnés to him come

Whan he was in his lusty agé,
The lepre caught in his viságe
And so forth over all aboute
That he ne mighté riden oute.
So left he bothé shield and spere,
As he that might him nought be-
stere,

And helde him in his chamber close.
Through all the world the fame
arose.

The greté clerkés ben assent
And com at his commaundémént
To tret upon this lordés hele.
So longé they to-gider dele,
That they upon this medicíne
Appointen hem and determíne,
That in the maner as it stood
They wolde him bath in childés
blood

Withinné seven winter age.
Foras they sain, that shulde assuage
The leper and all the violéce,
Which that they knewe of accidéce
And nought by way of kinde is falle.
And therto they accorden alle
As for fináll conclusion,
And tolden her opiniön
To themperour. And he anone
His counseil toke, and therupon
With letters and with sealés out
They send in every londe about
The yongé children for to seche,
Whose blood, they said, shuldé be
leche

For themperourés maladie.

"There was inough to wepe and
crie

Among the moders, whan they herde
How wofully this causé ferde.
But nethéles they moten bowe,
And thus womén there come inowe,
With children soukend on the tete;
Tho was there many terés lete.

"But were hem liefé or were hem
loth,

¹ Wone, dwell.

³ Rede, read.

² Sue, follow

⁴ Rede, advise.

The women and the children both
 Into the paleis forth be brought
 With many a sory hertés thought
 Of hem whiche of her¹ body bore
 The children hadde, and so forlore
 Within a whilé shulden se,
 The moders wepe in her degre
 And many of hem a swouné falle,
 The yongé babies crieden alle.
 This noise arose, this lorde it herde
 And lokéd out, and how it ferde
 He sigh, and as who saith abraide
 Out of his slepe and thus he saide :
 ‘O thou diviné purveaunce,
 Which every man in the balaunce
 Of kinde hast forméd to be liche,—
 The pouer is bore as is the riche
 And dieth in the samé wise ;
 Upon the fole, upon the wise,
 Sikkénse and hele entér comune ;
 May none escheué that fortune
 Which kinde hath in her lawé sette ;
 Her strengthe and beauté ben be-
 sette
 To every man aliché free ;
 That she preferreth no degre
 As in the disposicion
 Of bodily complexion.
 And eke, of soulé resonáble,
 The pouer childe is bore as able
 To vertue as the kingés sone.
 For every man his owné wone²
 After the lust of his assay
 The Vice or Vertue chesé may.
 Thus stonden allé men fraunchised,
 But in estate they ben devised ;
 To somé worship and richesse,
 To somé pouérte and distresse ;
 One lordeth and an other serveth :
 But yet as every man deserveth
 The world yeveth nought his yeftés
 here.
 And certés he hath great matere

To ben of good condiciön,
 Whiche hath in his subjectiön
 The men that ben of his sem-
 blaunce.’

And eke he toke his remembraunce,
 How he that madé lawe of kinde
 Wolde every man to lawé binde,
 And bad a man, suche as he wolde
 Toward him self, right such he
 sholde

Toward an other done also.

“And thus this worthy lord as tho¹
 Set in balaunce his owne estate
 And with him self stood in debate
 And thoughté, howe it was nought
 good

To se so mochel mannés blood
 Be spilt by cause of him alone.

“He sigh also the greté mone
 Of that the moders were unglad,
 And of the wo the children made
 Wherof that all his herté tendreth,
 And such pité within engendreth
 That him was lever for to chese
 His owné body for to lese,
 Than se so great a mordre wrought
 Upon the blood which gilteth
 nought.

Thus for the pité whiche he toke,
 All other lechés he forsoke
 And put him out of aventure
 Al only into Goddés cure
 And saith : ‘Who that woll maister
 be

He mot be servaunt to pité,’
 So ferforth he was overcome
 With charité, that he hath nomic
 His counseil and his officérs,
 And badde unto his tresorérs,
 That they his tresour all about
 Departé² among the pouer route
 Of women and of children bothe,
 Wherof they might hem fede and
 clothe

¹ *Her*, their.

² *His owné wone*, according to his own usage.

¹ *As tho*, as then. ² *De parte*, part out, divide.

And sauflly tornen home ayein
 Withoute loss of any grein.
 Through Charité thus he dispendeth
 His good, wherof that he amendeth
 Thepouer people and countrevailleth
 The harm that he hem sotravaileth.
 And thus the wofull nightés sorwe
 To joie is tornéd on the morwe.
 All was thanking, all was blessing,
 Whiche erst was wepinge and
 cursing.

These women gone home glad
 inough,

Echone for joie on other lough
 And praiden for this lordés hele,
 Whiche hath releséd the quairéle
 And hath his owné will forsake
 In Charite for Goddés sake.
 But now hereafter thou shalte here
 What God hath wrought in this
 matére,

As he that doth all equité.
 To him that wroughté Charité
 He was ayeinward charitoús
 And to pité he was pitóús.
 For it was never knowé yit,
 That Charité goth unauquit.
 The night whan he was laid to
 slepe,

The highé God, which wold him
 kepe,

Saint Peter and saint Poule him
 sende,

By whom he wolde his lepre
 amende.

They two to him slepénd appere
 Fro God, and said in this manére:
 ‘O Constantin, for thou hast
 served

Pité, thou hast pité deserved.
 Forthý thou shalt such pité have,
 That God through pité wold the save.
 So shalt thou double helé finde,
 First for thy bodeliché kinde,
 And for thy wofull soule also.

Thou shalt ben hole of bothé two.
 And for thou shalt the nought de-
 speire,

Thy lepré shall no more empeire
 Till thou wolt sendé therupon
 Unto the mount of Celiön,
 Where that Silvéster and his clergie
 To-gider dwelle in compaignie
 For drede of the, which many a day
 Hast ben a fo to Cristés lay¹,
 And hast destruied to mochel shame
 The prechours of his holy name.
 But now thou hast somdele appesed
 Thy God and with good dedé
 plesed,

That thou thy pité hast bewared
 Upon the blood which thou hast
 spared.

Forthý to thy salvaciön
 Thou shalt have informaciön,
 Such as Silvéster shall the teche,
 The nedeth of none other leche.
 This emperour, whiche all this
 herde :

‘Graunt mercý Lorde, he answerde,
 I wold do so as ye me say.
 But of o thing I woldé pray,
 What shall I telle unto Silvéstre
 Or of your name or of your estre?’²
 And they him tolden what they
 hight

And forth with all oute of his sight
 They passen up into the heven.
 And he awoke out of his sweven³
 And clepeth, and men come anone
 And tolde his dreme, and therupon
 In suche a wise as he hem telleth
 The mount wher that Silvester
 dwelleth

They have in allé hasté sought,
 And founde he was, and with hem
 brought
 To themperour, which to him tolde

¹ Lay, law, faith.

² Estre, being.

³ Sweven, dream.

His sweven and ellés whathe wolde.
And whan Silvéster hath herd the
king

He was right joyfull of this thing,
And him began with all his wit
To techen upon Holy Writ.
First how mankindé was forlore,
And how the hîghe God therfore
His Soné sendé from above,
Which boré was for mannés love;
And after of his owné chois'
He toke his deth upon the crois;
And how in grave he was beloke,
And how that he hath hellé broke
And toke hem out¹ that were him
leve.¹

And for to make us full beleve
That he was verray Goddes Sone
Ayein the kinde of mannés wone
Fro deth he rose the thriddé day.
And whan he wolde, as he well
may,

He stigh up to his Father even
With flessch and blood into the
heven;

And right so in the samé forme,
In flessch and blood, he shall re-
torne,

Whan timé cometh, to quicke and
dede

At thilké wofull Day of Drede,
Where every man shall take his
dome

Als well the maister as the grome.
The mighty kingés retenue
That Day may stonde of no valúe
With worldés strengthé to defende;
For every man not than entende
To stond upon his owné dedes
And leve all other mennés nedes.
That Day may no counsél avails,
The pledour and the pleé shall faile;
The sentence of that ilké day
May none appele sette in delay;

¹ *Leve*, *deu.*

There may no gold the jugé plie
That he ne shall the sothé trie
And setten every man upright,
As well the plowman as the knight.
The leudé man, the greté clerke
Shall stonde upon his owné werke;
And suche as he is foundé tho,
Such shall he be for evermo,
There may no peiné be relesed,
There may no joic ben encresed,
But endéles as they have do
He shall receivé one of two.

“And thus Silvester with his
sawe

The ground of all the newé lawe
With great devoción he precheth
Fro point to point and plainly
techeth

Unto this hethen emperour
And saith: ‘The hîghe Creatour
Hath underfonge his Charité
Of that he wroughté suche pité,
Whan he the children had on honde.’

“Thus whan this lord hath un-
derstonde

Of all this thing how that it ferde,
Unto Silvéster he than answérde
With all his holé herte and saith,
That he is redy to the feith.
And so the vessell, which for blood
Was made, Silvéster, there¹ it stood
With clené water of the welle
In allé haste he let do felle
And setté Constantín therinne
All nakéd up unto the chinne.
And in the while it was begunne,
A light, as though it were a sunne,
Fro heven into the placé come
Where that he toke his christen-
dome,

And ever amonge the holy tales
Lich as they weren fisshes scales
They fellen from him now and efté,
Till that there was nothing belefte

¹ *There*, where.

Of all this greté maladié.
 For he that wolde him purifie
 The highé God hath made him
 clene,
 So that there lefté nothing sene. *
 He hath him clenséd bothé two
 The body and the soule also.
 Tho¹ knew this emperoúr in dede,
 That Cristés feith was for to drede,
 And sende anone his letters out
 And let do crien all aboute
 Up pein of deth, that no man
 weive,
 That he baptismé ne receive.
 After his moder quene Eleine
 He sende, and so betwene hem
 tweine
 They treten, that the citee all
 Was christnéd, and she forth with
 all.
 This emperoúr, which hele hath
 found,
 Withinné Rome anone let founde
 Two churches, which that he did
 make²
 For Peter and for Poulés sake,
 Of whom he hadde a visión
 And yaf therto possession
 Of lordship and of worldés good.
 And how so that his will was good
 Toward the Pope and his fraunchise,
 Yet hath it provéd otherwise
 To se the worching of the dede.
 For in croniqué thus I rede
 Anone as he hath made the yefte
 A vois was herde on high the lefté,³
 Of which all Romé was adradde
 And said: 'This day is venim
 shadde
 In Holy Chirche, of temporall

¹ *Tho*, then.

² *Did make*, caused to be made.

³ *Lefté*, air.

Which medleth¹ with the spirituall.
 And how it stant of that degré
 Yet a man may the sothe se,
 God may amende it, whan he wille,
 I can therto none other skille.
 But for to go there I began,
 How Charité may helpe a man
 To bothé worldés, I have saide.
 And if thou have an eré laide,
 My soné, thou might understonde,
 If Charité be take on honde,
 There folweth after mochel grace.
 Forthý if that thou wolt purcháce
 How that thou might Envié flee,
 Acquainté the with Charite,
 Whiche is the Vertue Sovereine."—

"My fader, I shall do my peinc.
 For this ensample whiche ye tolde
 With all min herte I have witholde,
 So that I shall for evermore
 Escheue Envié well the more.
 And that I have er this misdo
 Yive me my penaunce er I go.
 And over that to my matere
 Of shriflé, why we sitten here
 In priveté betwene us twey,
 Now axeth what there is I prey."—

"My godé sone, and for thy lore
 I woll the tellé what is more,
 So that thou shalt the Vices knowe.
 For whan they be to thec full
 knowe,

Thou might hem wel the better
 eschue.

And for this cause I thenké sue
 The formé bothe and the matere,
 As now suendé thou shalt here,
 Which Vicé stant nexte after this.
 And whan thou wost how that it is,
 As thou shalt heré my devise,
 Thou might thyself the better avise.

¹ *Medleth*, mingelth.

Book III.

OF WRATH.

If thou the Vices list to knowe,
My sone, it hath nought be
unknowe
Fro first that men their swerdés
grounde,
That there nis one upon this
grounde

A Vicé foreine fro the lawe,
Wherof that many a good felawe
Hath be distraught by sodein
chaunce.

And yet to kindé no plesaunce
It doth, but where he most acheveth
His purpose, most to kinde he
greveth,

As he whiche out of consciéce
Is enemy unto paciéce.
And is by name one of the Seven,
Whiche oft hath set the world un-
even,

And clepéd is the cruel Ire,
Whose herte is evermore on fire
To speke amis, and to do, bothe,
For his servaúnts ben ever wrothe."

"My godé fader, tell me this
What thinge is Iré?"—"Sone, it is
That in our englissh Wrath is hote,
Whiche hath his wordés ay so hote,
That all a mannés paciéce
Is firéd of thé violence.

For he with him hath ever five
Servaunts, that helpen him to strive.
The first of hem Maléncoly

Is clepéd, whiche in compaignie
An hundred times in an houre
Woll as an angry besté loure.
And no man wot the causé why.
My soné, shrive the now forthý,
Hast thou be Malencolien?"—

"Ye fader, by saint Julien.
But¹ I untrewé wordés use
I may me nought therof excuse.
And all maketh Lové, well I wote,
Of which min herte is ever hote,
So that I brenne as dothe a glede
For wrathé that I may nought
spede.

And thus full oft a day for nought
Saufe onlich of min owné thought
I am so with my selven wroth,
That how so that the gamé goth
With other men, I am nought glad
But I am well the more unglad;
For that is other mennés game
It torneth me to puré grame.²
Thus am I with my self oppressed
Of thought the whiche I have in-
pressed,

That all wakénd I dreme and mete,³
That I with her alone mete⁴
And pray her of some good answe're.
But for she wol nought gladly swere,
She saith me 'Nay' withouten othe.
And thus waxe I withinné wrothe

¹ But, unless.

² Mete, dream.

³ Gram, vexation.

⁴ Mete, meet

That outward I am all affraied
 And so distempred and so esmaied,
 A thousand times on a day
 There souneth in min eres 'Nay,'
 The which she saidé me to-fore.*
 Thus be my wittés all forloie.
 And namély¹ whan I beginne
 To reken with my self withinne,
 How many yeeis ben agone,
 Sith I have truely lovéd one
 And never toke of her other hede,
 And ever a liché for to spede
 I am, the more I with her dele,
 So that min hap and all min hele
 Mc thenketh is ay the lenger the
 ferre.²

That bringeth my gladship out of
 herre,

Wherof my wittés ben empeired
 And I, as who saith, all dispeired,
 For finally whan that I muse
 And thenke, how she woll me re-
 fuse,

I am with Anger so bestad,
 For al this world might I be glad.
 And for the whilé that it lasteth
 All up so down my joie it casteth,
 And ay the further that I be
 Whan I ne may my lady se,
 The more I am redý to Wrathe,
 That for the touching of a lath
 Or for the torning of a stre³
 I wode⁴ as doth the wildé see
 And am so malencolióus,
 That there nis servaunt in min
 house

Ne none of tho that be aboute,
 That eche of hem ne stant in doute
 And wenen that I shuldé rave,
 For anger that they se me have.
 And so they wonder more and lasse,
 Til that they seen it overpasse.
 But fader, if it so betide,

That I approche at any tide
 The placé where my lady is,
 And thanné that her like iwis
 To speke a goodly word untó me,
 For all the gold that is in Romé
 Ne couth I after that be wroth,
 But all min anger overgoth.
 So glad I am of the preséncé
 Of hiré, that I all offence
 Foryete, as though it weré nought.
 So over glad is than my thought.
 And nethéles, the soth to telle,
 Ayeinward if it so befelle,
 That I at thilké timé sigh
 On me that she miscaste her eye,
 Or that she listé nought to loke,
 And I therof good hedé toke,
 Anone into my first estate
 I torne and am with that so mate,¹
 That ever it is aliché wicke.
 And thus min honde ayein the
 pricke

I hurte and have don many a day,
 And go so forth as I go may
 Full ofté biting on my lippe
 And make unto my self a whippe
 With whiche in many a chele and
 hete

My wofull herte is so tobete,²
 That all my wittés ben unsofte,
 And I am wrothe I not³ how ofte.
 And all it is malencolíe,
 Which groweth on the fantasie
 Of Lové that me woll nought
 loute.⁴

So bere I forth an angry snoute
 Full many times in a yere.
 But fader, now ye sitten here
 In Lovés stede, I you beseche,
 That some ensample ye me teche,
 Wherof I may my self appese."—

"My soné, for thin hertés ese

¹ *Mate*, deadened in spirit.

² *Tobete*, to is an intensive prefix.

³ *Not*, know not.

⁴ Love that will not bow to me.

¹ *Namely*, especially. ² *Ferre*, farther.

³ *Stre*, straw.

⁴ *Wode*, rage madly.

I shall fulfillé thy praieré,
So that thou might the better lere,
What mischefe that this Vicéstereth,
Whiche in his anger nought for-
bereth,

Wherof that after him forthenkeh,
Whan he is sobre, and that he
thenkeh

Upon the folie of his dede.

But if thou ever in cause of Love
Shalt deme, and thou be so above
That thou might lede it at thy wille,
Let never through thy Wrathé spille
Whiche every kindé shuldé save.

For it sit every man to have
Reward to love and to his might,
Ayein whos strengthe may no wight.
What Nature hath set in her lawe,
Ther may no mannés might with-
drawe,

And who that worcheth thereaycin,
Full ofté time it hath be sein,
There hath befallé great ven-
geaunce,

Wherof I finde a remembraunce.

"Ovide after the timé tho
Tolde an ensample and saide so,
How that whilóm Tiresias,
As he walkéndé goth par cas,
Upon an high mountein he sigh
Two serpentés in his waie nigh.

And they so, as natúre hem taught,
Assembled were, and he tho cought
A yerdé, which he bare on honde,
And thoughté, that he wolde fonde¹
To letten hem, and smote hem bothe,
Wherof the goddes weren wrothe.
And for he hath destourbé kinde
And was so to Natúre unkinde,
Unkindelich he was transformed,
That he, which erst a man was
formed,

Into a woman was forshape ;
That was to him an angry jape.

¹ Fonde, try.

But for that he with anger wrought
His anger angerliche he bought.

"Lo, thus my sone, Ovide hath
write,

Wherof thou might by reson wite
More is a man than suche a beste,
So might it never ben honéste
A man to wrathen him to sore
Of that another doth the lore
Of kinde, in whiche is no malíce,
But only that it is a Vice,
And though a man be resonáble,
Yet after kinde he is meváble
To lové where¹ he woll or none.
Thenk thou, my soné, therupon
And do Maléncolie away,
For love hath ever his lust to pley
As he which wold no lifé greve."—

"My fader, that I may well leve"²
All that ye tellen it is skille,³
Let every man love as he wille,
Be so it be nought my lady,
For I shall nought bewroth thereby.
But that I wrath and fare amis
Alone upon my self it is,
That I with bothé love and kinde
Am so bestad, that I can finde
No wey howe I it may astert,
Which stant upon min owné hert
And toucheth to none other life
Sauf onely to that sweté wife,
For whom, but if it be amended,
My gladdé daiés ben dispended,
That I my self shall nought forbere
The Wrath the whiché now I bere,
For therof is none other liche.
Nowe axeth forth I you besече
Of Wrathé, if there ough ellés is,
Wherof to shrivé."—"Sone yis.

Of Wrathé the secónd is Chest,⁴
Which hath the windés of tempest
To kepe, and many a sodein blast
He bloweth, wherof ben agast

¹ *Where*, whether.

³ *Skille*, reason.

² *Leve*, believe.

⁴ *Chest*, strife.

They that desiren pees and rest.
 He is that ilke ungoodliest,
 Which many a lusty love hath
 twinned,
 For he bereth ever his mouth un-
 pinned,
 So that his lippés ben unloke
 And his coráge is all to-broke,
 That every thing whiche he cantele,
 It springeth up as doth a welle,
 Which may none of his stremés hide,
 But renneth out on every side.
 So boilen up the foulé sawes,
 That Chesté wote ¹ of his félawes.
 For as a sívé ² kepeth ale,
 Right so can chesté kepe a tale;
 All that he wote he woll disclose
 And speke er any man oppose.
 As a citee withoute a walle,
 Where men may gon out overalle
 Withouten any resistéce,
 So with his crokéd eloquence
 He speketh all that he wot withinne,
 Wherof men lesé more than winne.
 For often time of his chiding
 He bringeth to housé such tidng
 That makéth werre at beddés hede.
 He is the levein of the brede
 Which soureth all the past ³ about.
 Men ought well suché one to doute. ⁴
 For ever his bowe is redy bent,
 And whome he hit I tell him shent, ⁵
 If he may perce him with his tonge.
 And eke so loude his belle is ronge,
 That of the noise and of the sounne
 Men feren him in all the towne
 Well moré than they done of
 thonder;
 For that is cause of moré wonder.
 For with the windés, which he
 bloweth,

Full ofté sith he overthroweth
 The citees and the polecie,
 That I have herd the people crie
 And echone saide in his degre:
 ‘Ha, wické tungé, wo thou be!’
 For men sain, that the hardé bone—
 All though him selvé havé none—
 A tungé braketh it all to pieces.
 He hath so many sondry spieces ¹
 Of Vicé, that I may nought wele
 Describe hem by a thousand dele, ²
 But whan that he to Chesté falleth,
 Full many a wonder thing befalleth,
 For he ne can no thing forbere.
 Now tell, my soné, thin answeére,
 If it hath ever so betid,
 That thou at any time hast chid
 Toward thy lové.”—“Fader, nay.
 Such Chesté yet unto this day
 Ne made I never, God forbede.
 For er I singé suche a crede,
 I haddé lever to be lewed,
 For thanne were I all beshrewed
 And worthy to be put abacke
 With all the sorwe upon my backe,
 That any man ordeigné couthe.
 But I spake never yet by mouthe
 That unto Chesté mighté touche.
 And that I durst right wel avouche
 Upon her selfe as for wisesse.
 For I wote of her gentillesse,
 That she me woldé wel excuse,
 That I no suché thinges use.
 And if it shuldé so betid,
 That I alगतés must chid,
 It mighté nought be to my Love.
 For so yet was I never above
 For all this widé world to winne,
 That I durst any word beginne,
 By which she might have ben
 amoved,
 And I of Chesté also reproved.
 But rather if it might her like,

¹ Wote, knows.² Síve, sieve.³ The leaven of the bread that turns all the paste sour.⁴ Doute, fear.⁵ I tell him shent, I count him put to shame.¹ Spieces, species, kinds.² By a thousandth part.

The besté wordés wolde I pike¹
 Whiche I couthe in min herté chese
 And serve hem forth in stede of chese,
 For that is helpelich to defie;²
 And so I wolde my wordés plie,
 That mighten Wrath and Ceste
 avale³

With telling of my softé tale.
 Thus dar I maken a forwárd,
 That never unto my lady wárd
 Yet spake I word in suche a wise,
 Wherof that Chesté shulde arise.
 Thus say I nought that I full ofte
 Ne have, whan I spake most softe,
 Par cas said more than enough;
 But so well halt no man the plough,
 That he ne balketh other while;
 Ne so wel can no man affile
 His tungé, that sometime in rape⁴
 Him may somelicht word overscape,
 And yet ne meneth he no cheste.
 But that I have ayein her heste
 Full ofte spoke, I am beknowe.⁵
 And how, my wille is that ye knowe;
 For whan my timé cometh about
 That I dar speke and say all out
 My longé love of which she wot,
 That ever in one aliché hot
 Me greveth, than all my disese
 I telle, and though it her displese
 I speke it forth and nought ne leve.
 And though it be beside her leve
 I hope and trowé nethéles,
 That I do nought ayein the pees.
 For though I telle her all my thought,
 She wot well that I chidé nought.
 Men may the highé God beseche,
 And he wol here a mannés speche
 And benought wroth of that he saith,
 So yiveth it me the moié feith
 And maketh me hardy soth to say,

That I dar wel the better prey
 My lady, whiche a woman is.
 For though I telle her that er is
 Of lové, which me greveth sore,
 Her oughté nought be wroth the
 more,

For I withouté noise or cry
 My plainté make all buxomly,
 To putten allé Wrath away,
 This dar I say unto this day
 Of Ceste, in earnest or in game,
 My lady shall me no thing blame.

“But ofte time it hath betid,
 That with my selven I have chid,
 That no man couthé better chide,
 And that hath ben at every tide,
 Whan I cam to my selve alone.
 For than I made a privé mone,
 And every talé by and by
 Whiche as I spake to my lady,
 I thenke and peise in my balaunce
 And drawe into my remembraunce.
 And than, if that I finde a lacke
 Of any word that I misspake,
 Which was to moche in any wise,
 Anone my wittés I despise
 And make a chiding in min herte
 That any word me shulde asterter¹
 Whiche as I shulde have holden inne
 And so forth after I beginne
 And loke if there was ellés ought
 To speke, and I ne spake it nought.
 And than if I may seche and finde,
 That any word ben left behinde,
 Whiche as I shuldé more have spoke,
 I wold upon my self be wroke
 And chidé with my selven so,
 That all my wit is over-go.
 For no man may his timé lore
 Recover, and thus I am therefore
 So overwroth in all my thought,
 That I my self chide all to nought.
 Thus for to moche, or for to lite,
 Full ofte I am my self to wite.²

¹ Pike, pick.

² Defie, digest. This belief was the origin of the old custom of ending dinner with cheese.

³ Avale, bring down.

⁴ Rape, haste.

⁵ I confess.

¹ Asterter, escape

² Wite, blame.

But all that may me nought auaile,
 With Chesté though I me trauaile,
 But oule on stoke and stoke on oule
 The moré that a man defoule,
 Men witen wel which hath the werse.
 And so to me nis worth a kerse,¹
 But torneth unto min owné hede,
 Though I till that I weré dede
 Wolde ever chide in suche a wise
 Of Love, as I to you devise.
 But fader, now ye have all herd
 In this manér, howe I have ferd
 Of Cheste and of Dissension,
 Yif me your absolucion.”—

“My sone, if that thou wistest all,
 What Chesté doth in speciall
 To love and to his welwilling,
 Thou woldest fleen his knowleching
 And lerné to be debonaire.
 For who that most can speké faire
 Is most accordend unto love.
 Fair speche hath ofté brought above
 Full many a man, as it is knowe,
 Whiche ellés shuld have ben right
 lowe

And failéd mochel of his wille.
 Forthý hold thou thy tungé stille
 And let thy wit thy will areste
 So that thou fallé nought in cheste,
 Whiche is the source of great dis-
 taunce,

And take into thy rémembraunce,
 If thou might geté paciéce,
 Which is the leche of all offence,
 As tellen us these oldé wise.
 For whan nought ellés may suffise
 By strengthé ne by mannés wit,
 Than paciéce it over sit
 And over cometh it at laste.
 But he may never longé laste,
 Which woll nought bow er that he
 breke.

Take hedé, sone, of that I speke.”—

“My fader, of your goodly speche

¹ Kerse, cross.

And of the wit, whiche ye me teche,
 I thonké you with all min hert.
 For that word shall me never astert,
 That I ne shall your wordés holde
 Of paciéce, as ye me tolde,
 Als ferforth as min herté thenketh
 And of my Wrath it me forthenketh.
 But fader, if ye forth with all
 Some good ensample in speciáll,
 Me wolden teche of some croníque,
 It shuldé well min herté like
 Of paciéncé for to here,
 So that I might in my matére
 The more unto my love obey
 And putten my disese away.”—

“My sone, a man to bye him
 pees

Behoveth suffre as Socrates
 Ensamplé lefté, whiche is write,
 And for thou shalt the sothé wite
 Of this ensample, what I mene,
 All though it be now litel sene
 Among the men thilke evidence,
 Yet he was upon paciéce
 So set, that he him self assay
 In thing, which might him most
 mispay,
 Desireth and a wicked wife
 He weddeth, which is sorwe and
 strife

Ayein his esé was contraire.
 But he spake ever soft and faire,
 Till it befell, as it is tolde,
 In winter, whan the day is colde,
 This wife was fro the wellé come,¹
 Where that a pot with water nome
 She hath and brought it into house,
 And sigh how that her sely spouse
 Was set and lookéd on a boke
 Nigh to the fire, as he which toke
 His ese as for a man of age.
 And she began the wodé rage
 And axeth him, what diuel hethought
 And bare on hond, that him nerought

¹ Nome, taken.

What labour that she toke on honde,
And saith, that suche an huse bonde
Was to a wife nought worth a stre.¹
He saide nouthur nay ne ye,
But helde him stille and lete her
chide.

And she, which may her self nought
hide,

Began withinné for to swelle
And that she brought in fro the welle,
The water pot, she hent a lofte
And bad him speke, and he all softe
Sat stille and nought a word answeerd.
And she was wroth that he so ferd,
And axeth him, if he be dede,
And all the water on his hede
She poured out and bad him awake.
But he, whiche woldénought forsake
His paciencé, thanné spake
And said, how that he fond no lake
In nothing which she haddé do,
For it was winter timé tho,
And winter, as by wey of kinde,
Which stormy is as men it finde,
First maketh the windés for to blowe
And after that, within a throwe,
He reineth and the water gates
Undoth, and thus my wife algates.
Which is with reson well bescin,
Hath made me bothé winde and rein
After the seson of the yere.
And than he set him ner the fire
And as he might his clothés dreide,"
That he nomore o word ne saide,
Wherof he gat him somdele rest,
For that him thought was for the
best.

"I not ³ if thilke ensample yit
Accordeth with a mannés wit
To suffre as Socrátes dede.
And if it fal in any stede
A man to lesé so his galle,

Him ought among the women alle
In Lové court by jugément
The namé bere of paciënt
To yive ensample to the good
Of paciencie how that it stood,
That other men it mighté knowe.
And, sone, if thou at any throwe
Be tempted ayein paciencie,
Take hede upon this evidence,
It shall par cas the lassé greve."—

"My fader, so as I believe
Of that shall be no maner nede,
For I woll také so good hede,
That er I fall in suche assay
I thinke escheue, if that I may.
But if there be ought ellés more,
Wherof I mighté také lore
I praié you, so as I dare,
Now telleth, that I may beware,
Some other tale of this mater."—

"Sone, it is ever good to lere
Wherof thou might thy word re-
streigne
Er that thou falle in any peine.
For who that can no counceil hide,
He may nought faile of wo beside,
Which shall befallé, er he it wite,
As I finde in the bokés write.

Yet cam there never good of stri'e
To seche in all a mannés life,
Though it beginne on puré game
Full ofte it torneth into graine
And doth grevaunce on somé side.
Wherof the greté clerk Ovide
After the lawé which was tho,
Of Jupiter and of Juno
Maketh in his bokés mencion,
How they felle at dissencion,
In manner as it were a borde,¹
As they begunné for to worde
Among hem self in priveté.
And that was upon this degré,
Whiche of the two more amorous is
Or man or wife. And upon this

¹ *Stre*, straw.

² Dried his clothes as well as he could.

³ *Not*, know not.

¹ *Borde*, just.

They mighten nought accorde in one
And toke a jugé therupon,
Which clepéd is Tiresias
And bede him demen in this cas.
And he withoute avisément
Ayein Junó yaf jugément.
This Goddesse upon his answeére
Was wroth and woldé nought for-
bere,

But tok away for evermo
The light from both his eyen two.
Whan Jupiter this harm hath sein
Another bienfait there ayein
He yaf and suche a grace him doth
That, for he wiste he saidé soth,
A soth-saier he was for ever.
But yet that other weré lever
Have had the loking of his eye
Than of his word the prophecie.
But how so that the sothé went,
Strife was the cause of that he hent
So great a peiné bodily.

"My soné, be thou ware thereby
And hold thy tungé stillé close,
For who that hath his word disclose
Er that he wité what he mene
He is full ofte nigh his tene¹
And leseth full many timé grace,
Wher that he wold his thank pur-
cháce,

And over this, my soné dere,
Of other men, if thou might here
In privité what they have wrought,
Hold counseil and discover it nought,
For Chesté can no counseil hele,²
Or be it wo or be it wele,
And take a tale into thy minde,
The which of olde ensample I finde.

Phebus, which maketh the daiés
light,

A love he haddé, which tho hight
Cornidé, whom aboven alle
He pleseth. But what shall befallé
Of lové, there is no man knoweth.

¹ *Tene*, vexation. ² *Hele*, conceal.

But as fortune her happés throweth,
So it befell upon a chaunce,
A yong knight toke her ácqueint-
aunce

And had of her all that he wolde.
But a fals bird, which she hath holde
And kept in chambre of puré youthe
Discovereth all that ever he couthe.
The briddés namé was as tho
Corvus, the which was than also
Well moré white than any swan,
And he, the shrewe, al that he can
Of his lady to Phebus saide.

And he for wrath his swerd out
braide,
With which Cornide anone he
slough.

But after, him was wo inough
And toke a full great repentaunce,
Wherof in token and remembraunce,
Of hem whiche usen wické speche,
Upon this brid he toke his wreche.
That there he was snow-white tofore
Ever afterward cole black therfore
He was transforméd, as it sheweth.
And many a man yet him beshreweth
And clepen him into this day
A raven, by whom yet men may
Take evidencé, whan he crieth,
That some mishap it signifieth.
Beware therfore and say the best,
If thou wolt be thy self in rest,
My godé sone, as I the rede.
And suche a daiés be now fele¹
In Lovés Courte, as it is saide,
That let her tungé's gone unteide.
My soné, be thou none of tho
To jangle and telle talés so,
And namély² that thou ne chide,
For Chesté can no counseil hide,
For Wrathé saidé never wele."—

"My fader, sothe is every dele,
That ye me teche, and I woll holde,
The reulé to whiché I am holdé,

¹ *Fele*, many. ² *Namely*, especially.

To fle the Cheste, as ye me bidde :
For well is him, that never chidde.
Now telle me forth if there be more,
As touchinge unto wrathés lore.”—

“Of ~~wrathe~~ yet there is another,
Whiche is to Chestel his owné brother,
And is by namé clepéd Hate,
That suffreth nought within his gate,
That there come other love or pces,
For he woll maké no relese
Of no debate whiche is befallé.
Now speke, if thou arte one of alle,
That with this Vice hath be wit-
holde.”¹—

“As yet forought tha ye metoldé,
My fader, I not wāt it is.”—

“In good feith, sone, I trowé
yis.”—

“My fader, nay, but ye me
lere.”—

“Now list, my sone, and thou
shalt here.

Hate is a Wrathé nought shewend,
But of long timé gaderénd,
And dwelleth in the herté loken
Till he se timé to be wroken.

And than he showeth his tempést
More sodein than the wildé beste,
Which wot nothing, what mercy is.
My sone, art thou knownen of
this?”—

“My gode fader, as I wene,
Now wote I somedele what ye mene,
But I dare saufully make an othe,
My lady was me never lothe.
I woll nought sweré nethéles,
That I of Hate am giltéles.
For whan I to my lady ply
Fro day to day and mercy cry,
And she no mercy on me laith,
But shorté wordés to me saith,
Though I my lady love algate,
Tho wordés mote I nedés hate,
And woldé they were all dispent .

¹ *Withholde*, held with.

Or so fer out of londé went
That I never after shuld hem here :
And yet love I my lady dere.
Thus is there Hate, as ye may se,
Betwene my ladies word and me.
The worde I hate and her I love,
What so me shall betide of love.
But furthermore I woll me shrive,
That I have hated all my live
These janglers, whiche of her envié
Ben ever redy for to lie,
For with her fals compássement
Full often they have made me shent
And hindred me full ofté timé,
Whan they no causé wisten by me,
But onlich of her owné thought.
And thus have I full ofté bought
The lye and drank nought of the
wine.

I wolde her hap were such as mine.
For how so that I be now shrive,
To hem ne may I nought foryive,
Untill I se hem at debate
With Love, and thanné min estate
They mighten by her owné deme
And loke how wel it shuld hem
queme¹

To hinder a man, that loveth sore.
And thus I hate hem evermore,
Til Love on hem wold done his
wreche ;

For that I shall alway beseche
Unto the mighty Cupido,
That he so mochel woldé do,
So as he is of Love a god,
To smite hem with the samé rod,
With whiche I am of Lové smiten,
So that they mighten know and
witen,

How hindring is a wofull peine
To him that lové wold atteigne.
Thus ever on hem I wait and hope,
Till I may se hem lepe a lope²

¹ *Queme*, be pleasing.

² *Lepe a lope*, take a leap.

And halten on the samé sore,
 Whiche I do now for evermore.
 I woldé thanné do my might
 So for to stonden in her light,
 That they ne shulden have a wey
 To that they wolden put away.
 I wolde hem put out of the stede
 Fro Lové, right as they me dede
 With that they speke of me by
 mouthe,

So wolde I do, if that I couthe
 Of hem, and thus so God me save
 Is all the Haté that I have
 Toward these janglers every dele,
 I wolde all other ferdé wele.
 Thus have I, fader, said my willc.
 Say ye now ferth, for I am stille."—

"My sone, of that thou hast me
 said

I holdé me nought fully paid,¹
 That thou wold haten any man
 To that accorden I ne can,
 Though he have hindred thee to-
 fore.

But this I tellé thee therfore,
 Thou might upon my benison
 Well haten the condicion
 Of tho janglér, as thou me toldest,
 But furthermore, of that thou
 woldest

Hem hinder in any other wise,
 Suche Hate is ever to despise.
 Forthý my sone, I wold thee rede,
 That thou drawe in by frendly hede
 That thou ne might nought do by
 Hate,

So might thou geté love algate
 And setté thee, my sone, in rest.
 For thou shalt finde it for the best,
 And over this so as I dare
 I redé, that thou be right ware
 Of other mennés Hate about,
 Whiche every wise man shuldédout,
 For Hate is ever upon await.

¹ Paid, sati fied.

And as the fissher on his bait
 Sleeth, whan he seeth the fisshes
 faste,

So whan he seeth time atté last
 That he may worche an other wo,
 Shall no man tornen him ther fro,
 That Haté nill his felonie
 Fulfill and feigné compaignie.
 Yet nethéles for fals semblaunt
 Is toward him of covenauñt
 Witholdé, so that under bothe
 The privé wrathé can him clothe,
 That he shall seme a great beleve.
 But ware thee weil, that thou ne
 leve

All that thou seest to-fore thin eye,
 So as the Gregois whilom sigh;
 The boke of Troié who so rede,
 There may he finde ensample in
 dede.

"**Gone**, after the destruction,
 Whan Troy was allé beté down
 And slain was Priamus the king.
 The Gregois, which of all this thing
 Ben causé, tornen home ayein.
 There may no man his hap withsain,
 It hath ben sene and felt full ofte,
 The hardé time after the softe.
 Byseeas they forth homeward went,
 A rage of great tempést hem hent.¹
 Juno let bende her partie bow,
 The sky wax derke, the wind gan
 blow,

The fry welken gan to thonder,
 As though the world shuld al
 asonder.

From heven out of the water gate,
 The reiny storm fell down algates,
 And all her tacle made unwelde,
 That no man might him self be-
 welde.

There may men heré shipmen crie
 That stood in aunter for to die.
 He that behindé sat to stere

¹ Hent, seized.

Maynought the foré stempne¹ here;
 The ship arose ayein the waves,
 The lodésman hath lost his lawes,
 The see bet in on every side,
 They nisten what fortune abide,
 But setten hem all in goddes will,
 Where² he wolde hem save or spill.
 And it fell thilké timé thus,
 There was a kingé, which Nauplus
 Was hote, and he a soné hadde
 At Troié, which the Gregois laddé
 As he that was made prince of alle,
 Till that Fortuné let him falle.
 His namé was Palámidés,
 But through an Haté hethéles
 Of som of hem his deth was caste
 And he by treson overcaste.
 His fader, whan he herde it telle,
 He swore, if ever his timé felle,
 He wolde him vengeif that he might,
 And therto his avow he hight.
 And thus this king through privé
 Hate

Abode upon a waite algate,
 For he was nought of suche emprise,
 To vengen him in open wise.

“The famé, which goth wíde
 where,
 Maketh knowe, how that the Gre-
 gois were

Homwárd with al the felaship
 Fro Troy upon the see by ship.
 Nauplus, whan he this understood
 And knew the tidés of the flood
 And sigh the wind blow to the londe,
 A great decept anone he fonde
 Of privé Hate, as thou shalte here,
 Wherof I telle all this matére.

“This king the wedergan beholde
 And wisté well, they moten holde
 Her cours endlonge his marché right,
 And made upon the derké night
 Of greté shidés³ and of blockes

Great fire ayeine the greaté rockes,
 To shew upon the hillés high,
 So that the flete of Grece it sigh.
 And so it fell right as he thought,
 This fleté, which an haven sought,
 The brighté firés sighe a fer,
 And they ben drawn ner and ner
 And wendé well and understood
 How all that fire was made for good
 To shewé where men shulde arrive.¹
 And thiderward they hasten blive.²
 In semblaunt as men sain is guile,
 And that was provéd thilké while.
 The ship, which wend his helpe
 accroche,³

Drof all to pieces on the roche.
 And so there deden ten or twelve
 There no man mighté helpe him
 selve,

For there they wenden⁴ deth escape
 Withouten helpe her deth was shape.
 Thus they that comen first to-fore
 Upon the rockés ben forlore,
 But through the noise and through
 the cry

The other weren ware therby,
 And whan the day began to rowe,⁵
 Tho mighten they the sothé knowe,
 That where they wenden frendés
 finde,

They fondé frendship all behinde.
 The londé than was soné weived,
 Where that they hadden be deceived,
 And toke hem to the highé see,
 Therto they saiden alle ye,
 Fro that day forthe and ware they
 were

Of that they had assaiéd there.

“My sone, herof thou might avise,
 How fraudé stant in many wise
 Amongés hem that guilé thinke.
 There is no scrivener with his inke,

¹ Foré stempne, voice in the bows.

² W'here, whether. ³ Shides, logs.

¹ Arrive, come to the shore

² Blive, quickly. ³ Also

⁴ W'enden, hoped. ⁵ Row

Whiche half the fraudé writé can,
That stant in suche a maner man.
Forthý the wisé men ne demen
The thingés after that they semen,
But after that they knowe and finde.
The mirrour sheweth in his kinde
As he had all the world withinne,
And is in soth nothing therinne.

And so fareth Haté for a throwe,¹
Till he a man hath overthrowe;
Shall no man knowé by his chere,
Whiche is avaunt ne whiche arere.
Forthý my soné, thenke on this."—

"My fader, so I woll iwis,²
And if there more of Wrathé be,
Nowe axeth forth pour charité,
As ye by your bokés knowe,
And I the sothé shall beknowe."—

"~~My~~ soné, thou shalt understonde,

That yet towardé Wrathé stonde
Of dedly Vices other two.
And for to telle her namés so
It is Contek and Homicide,
That ben to drede on every side.
Contek so as the bokés sain
Foolhast hath to his chamberlain,
By whose counseil all unavised
Is paciëncé most despised,
Till Homicidé with him mete.
Fro mercy they ben all unmete
And thus ben they the worst of alle
Of hem whiche unto Wrathé falle
In dedé both and eke in thought.
For they accompte her Wrath at
nought

But if there be sheding of blood.
And thus liche to a besté wode
They knowen nought the god of life,
Be so they havé swerde or knife
Her dedly wrathé for to wreke,
Of pité list hem nought to speke.
None other reson they ne fonge,
But that they ben of mightés stronge.

¹ *Throwe*, space of time.

² *Iwis*, certainly

But ware hem well in other place,
Where every man behoveth grace;
For there I trowe it shall him faile,
To whom no mercy might availe,
But wroughten upon tirannie,
That no pité ne might hem plie.
Now tell, my sone."—"My fader,
what?"—

"If thou hast be coupáble of that?"

"Myfader, nay, Crist me forbede;
I onliché speke of the dedé
Of which I never was coupáble
Withouten causé resonáble.
But this is nought to my matére
Of shrifté, why we sitten here.
For we ben set to shrive of Love,
As we beganné first above.
And nethéles I am beknowe,
That as touchénd of lovés throwe,
Whan I my wittés overwende,
Min hertés Contek hath none ende,
But ever stant upon debate
To great disese of min estate,
As for the timé that it lasteth.
For whan my fortune overcasteth
Her whele and is to me so straunge,
And that I se she woll nought
chaunge,

Than cast I all the worlde about
And thenk howe I at home in dout
I have all mytime in vein despended
And se nought how to be amended,
But rather for to be empeired,
As he that is well nigh despeired.
For I ne may no thank deserve,
And ever I love and ever I serve
And ever I am a liché nere,
Thus, for I stonde in suche a werc,
I am as who saith out of herre.¹
And thus upon my self I werre,
I bringe and put out allé pees,
That I full ofte in such a rees²
Am wery of min owné life,

¹ *Out of herre*, unhinged.

² *Rees*, stir of battle.

So that of Contek and of Strife
I am beknowe and have answerde,
As ye, my fader, now have herde.
Min herte is wonderly begone
With counseil, wherof wit is one,
Whiche hath resón in compaignie
Ayein the whiché stant partie
Will, which hath Hope of his ac-
corde.

And thus they bringen up discorde,
Witte and Resón counseilen ofte,
That I min herté shuldé softe
And that I shuldé Will remue¹
And put him out of retenue
Or elles holde him under fote.
For as they sain, if that he mote
His owné reule have upon honde.
There shall no Witben understonde
Of Hope; also they tellen this,
That over all where that he is
He set the herte in jeopartie
With wishing and with fantasie,
And is nought trewe of that he saith,
So that there is on him no feith.
Thus with Resón and Witte avised
Is Will and Hope all day despised.
Resón saith, that I shuldé leve
To lové, where there is no leve
To spede, and Will saith there ayein
That such an herte is to vilain
Which dare nought love till that he
spede;

Let Hopé serve at suché nede.
He saith eke, where an herte sit
All holé governed upon Wit,
He hath this livés lust forlore.
And thus min herte is all to-tore
Of suché a Contek, as they make.
But yet I may nought Will forsake
That he nis maister of my thought,
Or that I spede, or spedénought.”—

“Thou dost, my sone, ayeinst
the right,
But Love is of so great a might,

¹ *Remue*, remove.

His lawé may no man refuse,
So might thou there the better
excuse.

And nethéles thou shalt be lerned,
That thy Will shuldé be govérned
Of Reson moré than of Kinde;
Wherof a talé write I finde.

A philosopfre of which men
tolde

There was whilom by daiés olde,
And Diogénes than he hight.
So olde he was that he ne might
The world travaile, and for the best
He shope him for to take his rest
And dwelle at home in suche a wise,
That nigh his house he let devise
Endlonge upon an axel tree
To set a tonne in suche degree
That he it mighté torne aboute:
Wherof one heed was taken oute
For he therinne sitte shulde,
And torné him selve as he wolde
And také the eire and se the heaven
And deme of the planetés seven
As he which couthé mochel what.¹
And thus full ofté there he sat
To muse in his philosophie
Solé withouten compaignie;
So that upon a morwe tide
A thing which shuldé tho betide,
Whan he was sette here as him list
To loke upon the sonne arist,
Wherof the propertie he sigh,
It fellé, there cam ridend nigh
King Alisaundré with a route.
And as he cast his eye aboute
He sigh this tonne, and what it ment
He woldé wite, and thider sent
A knight, by whom he might it
knowe.

And he him self that ilké throwe
Abode and hoveth theré stille.
This knight after the kingés wílle

¹ *Couthé mochel what*, knew a good deal, much what, a formation similar to somewhat.

With sporé made his horse to gone
 And to the tonne he came anone,
 Where that he fonde a man of age,
 And he him toldé the message,
 Suche as the kinge him haddé bede,
 And axeth why in thilké stede¹
 The tonnè stood and what it was.
 And he, which understood the cas,
 Sat still and spake no worde ayein.
 The knight bad speke and saith :

‘Vilain,

Thou shalt me telle, er that I go,
 It is thy king, whiche axeth so.’

‘My king,’ quod he, ‘that were
 unright.’

‘What is he thanné?’ saith the
 knight,

‘Is he thy man?’ ‘That say I
 nought,’

Quod he, ‘but this I am bethought,
 My mannés man how that he is.’

‘Thou liest, falsé cherle, iwis,’²

‘The knight him said and was right
 wroth,

And to the kinge ayein he goth
 And told him, how this man
 answérde.

The king whan he this talé herde
 Bad that they shulden all abide,
 For he him self wold thider ride.
 And whan he came to fore the tonne,
 He hath his talé thus begonne :

‘Al heil,’ he saith, ‘what man art
 thou?’

Quod he : ‘Such one as thou seest
 now.’

The king, which haddé wordés wise,
 His agé woldé nought despise
 But saith : ‘My fader, I thee pray,
 That thou me wolt the causé say,
 How that I am thy mannés man?’
 ‘Sire king,’ quod he, ‘and that I can,
 If thou wilt.’—‘Yea,’ saith the
 king.—

¹ *Stade*, place.

² *Javis*, certainly.

Quod he : ‘This is the sothé thing :
 Sith I first reson understood
 And knew what thing was evil and
 good,

The Will, whiche of my body
 moveth,

Whos werkés that the god re-
 proveth,

I have restreignéé evermore
 Of him which stant under the lore
 Of Reson, whos subject he is,
 So that he may nought done amis.

And thus by wey of covaunant
 Will is my Man and my Servaunt
 And ever háth be and ever shall.
 And thy Will is thy Principal
 And hath the lordship of thy wit,
 So that thou coutheest never yet
 Take a day rest of thy labour.

But for to be a conqueroúr
 Of worldés good, which may nought
 laste,

Thou hiést ever a liché faste,
 Where thou no Reson hast to winne.
 And thus thy Will is cause of sinne
 And is thy Loid to whom thou
 servest,

Wherof thou litel thank deservest.’
 The king, of that he thus answérde,
 Was nothing wroth, but when he
 herd

The highé wisdom, whiche he saide,
 With goodly wordés this he praide,
 That he him woldé tell his name.

‘I am,’ quod he, ‘that ilké same,
 Which that men Diogénés calle.’
 Tho was the king right glad with
 alle,

For he had herd ofté to fore
 What man he was, so that therefore
 He saide : ‘O wisé Diogéne,
 Now shall thy greté wit be sene,
 For thou shalt of my yifté have,
 What worldés thingé thou wolt
 crave.’

Quod he: 'Than hove out of my
sonne

And lete it shine into my tonne,
For thou benimst me¹ thilké yifte,
Which lith nought in thy might to
shifte :

None other good of thee menedeth.'

"The king, whom every contré
dredeth,

Lo, thus he was enforméd there:
Wherof, my soné, thou might lere,
How that thy Wil shal nought be
leved,

Where it is nought of Wit releved.
And thou hast said thy self er this,
How that thy Wil thy maister is,
Through which thin hertés thought
withinne

Is ever of kontek to beginne,
So that it greatly is to drede,
That it no homicidé brede.
For Love is of a wonder kinde
And hath his wittés ofté blinde,
That they fro mannés Reson falle.
But whan that it is so befalle,
That Will shall his coragé lede
In Lovés cause, it is to drede :
Wherof I finde ensample write,
Whiche is behovely for to wite.

"**I rede a tale**, and telleth this,
The citee which Semiramis
Encloséd hath with walle about
Of worthy folk with many a rout
Was inhabited here and there.
Amongé the which two there were
Above all other noble and great,
Dwellend tho within a strete
So nigh to-gider, as it was sene,
That there was nothing hem be-
twene

But wowe² to wowe and walle to
walle.

¹ Benimst me, takest away from me.

² Wowe, wall. "Wowe" and "wal" are
equivalent, like "fol" w and "sue" fourteen
lines later.

This o lord hath in speciale
A sone, a lusty bachelér,
In all the towne was none his pere.
That other had a doughter eke
In all the lond that for to seke
Men wisten none so faire as she.
And fell so, as it shuldé be,
This fairé doughter nigh this sone,
As they to-gider thanné wone,¹
Cupíd hath so the thingés shape,
That theyne might his honds escape
That he his fire on hem ne caste,
Wherof her herts he overcaste
To folwé thilké lore and sue,
Which never man yet mightescheue.
And that was Love, as it is happed,
Whiche hath her hertés so be-
trapped,

That they by allé waiés seche,
How that they mighten winne a
speche

Her wofull peiné for to lesse.
Who loveth wel, it may nought
misse,

And namély² whan there ben two
Of one accord, how so it go,
But if that they some waié finde,
For Love is ever of suche a kinde
And hath his folk so wel affaited,
That how so that it be awaited,
There may no man the purpos let.³
And thus betwene hem two they set
An hole upon a wal to make
Through which they have her coun-
seil take

At allé timés, whan they might.
This fairé maiden Tisbé hight
And he, whom that she lovéd hote,
Was Pirus by namé hote.
So longe her lesson they recorden,
Til atté lasté they accorden
By nightés timé for to wende
Alone out fro the townés ende,

¹ Wone, dwell.

² Namely, especially.

³ Let, hinder

Where was a welle under a tree,
And who cam first, or she or he,
He shuldé stillé there abide.
So it befell the nightés tide
This maiden which disguised was,
All privély the softé pas
Goth through the largé town un-
knowe,

Till that she cam within a throwe
Where that she likéd for to dwelle
At thilke unhappy freshé welle,
Which was also the forest nigh;
Where she coménd a leon sigh
Into the feld to take his pray
In haste. And she tho fledde away.
So as Fortúné shuldé falle,
For fere, and let her wimpel¹ falle
Nigh to the wel upon therbage.
This wildé leon in his rage
A besté whiche he found there out
Hathslain, and with his bloody snout
Whan he hath eten what he wolde,
To drinke of thilké stremés colde
Come to the wellé, where he fonde
The wimpel, whiche out of her honde
Was falle, and he it hath to-drawe,
Bebledde aboute and all forgnawe.
And than he straught² him for to
drinke

Upon the fressshé wellés brinke,
And after that out of the plein
He torneth to the wode ayein.
And Tisbé dursté nought remewe,
But as a brid which were in mewe,³
Within a bussh she kept her close
So stillé that she nought arose
Unto her self and pleigneth ay.
And fell, while that she theré lay,
This Piramus cam after sone
Unto the welle and by the mone
He found her wimpel bloody there.
Cam never yet to mannés ere

Tidingé ne to mannés sight
Merveillé which so sore aflight¹
A mannés herte, as it tho dede
To him, whiche in the samé stede
With many a woful cômpleigninge
Began his hondés for to wringe
As he which deemeth sikerly
That she be dede. And sodeinly
His swerd all naked out he braide
In his Foolhaste and thus he saide:
'I am cause of this felonie,
So it is reson that I deic,
And she is dede by cause of me.'
And with that worde upon his kne
He fell, and to the goddés alle
Up to the heven he gan to calle
And praie, sithen² it was so
That he may nought his love as tho:³
Have in this world, that of her grace
He might her have in other placé,
For heré wolde he nought abide,
He saith. But as it shall betide,
The pomel of his swerd to ground
He set and through his hert a wound
He made up to the baré hilde,
And in this wisé him self spilte
With his Foolhaste, and deth he
nam.⁴

For she within a whilé cam,
Where he lay dede upon his knife,
So woful yet was never life
As Tisbé was. Whan she him sigh,
She mighté nought one worde on
high
Out spoké, for her herté shette,
That of her life no pris she sette
But dedé swounend down she felle;
Till after whan it so befelle,
That she out of her traunce awoke,
With many a woful pitous loke
Her eye alwey among she caste
Upon her love and atté laste
She caught her breth and saidethus:

¹ *Wimpel*, neck-covering.

² *Straught*, stretched.

³ *Mewe*, cage for moulting birds.

¹ *Aflight*, afflicted.

² *Tho*, then.

³ *Sithen*, since.

⁴ *Nam*, took.

'O thou, which clepéd art Venús,
Goddesse of Love, and thou Cupide,
Which Lovés cause hast for to guide,
I wot now wel that ye be blinde,
Of thilke unhap whiche I nowe finde
Only betwene my love and me.
This Piramus, whiche here I se
Bledend, O, what hath he deserved?
For he your hest hath kept and
served,

And was yonge and I both also,
Alas, why do ye with us so?
Ye set our hertés both on fire
And made us suché thing desire
Wherof that we no skillé couthe.
But thus our freshé lusty youthe
Withouten joy is all despended,
Which thing may never ben
amended.

For as for me this woll I say,
That me is lever for to deie
Than live after this sorwefull day.
And with this word where as he lay
Her love in armés she embraseth
Her owné deth and so purchaseth,
That now she wepte and now she
kiste,

Till atté laste, ere she it wiste,
So great a sorwe is to her falle
Whiche overgoth her wittés alle,
And she, which mighté nought
asterte,

The swerdés pointe ayein her herte
She set and fell down therupon,
Wherof that she was dede anone.
And thus both on a¹ swerd bledend
They weré founden dede liggend.

"Now thou, my sone, hast herd
this tale

Beware that of thin owné bale
Thou be nought cause in thy Fool-
haste,

And kepe that thou thy Wit newaste
Upon thy thought in aventure,

Wherof thy livés forfetúre
May falle. And if thou have so
thought

Erthis, tell on and hide it nought."—

"My fader, upon Lovés side
My consciéce I wol nought hide,
How that for love of puré wo
I have ben ofté moved so
That with my wishes if I might
A thousand timés, I you plight,
I haddé storven¹ in a day.
And therof I me shrivé may,
Though Lové fully me ne slough,
My will to deie was inough.
So am I of my Will coupáble,
And yet is she nought merciáble
Which may me yivé life and hele,
But that herlist nought with medele
I wot by whos conséil it is
And him wolde I long time er this,
And yet I wolde and ever shall,
Sleen and destrúie in speciáll.
The golde of niné kingés londes
Ne shulde him savé fro min hondes,
In my powér if that he were.
But yet him stant of me no fere,
For nought that ever I can manáce
He is the hinderer of my grace,
Til he be dede I may nought spede.
So mote I nedés taken hede
And shape how that he were away,
If I therto may finde a way."—

"My soné, tell me now forthy
Whiche is that mortal enemy,
That thou manácest to be dede."—

"My fader, it is suche a quede²
That where I come, he is tofore
And doth so that my cause is lore"

"What is his name?" "It is
Daunger,
Whiche is my ladies counseiler,
For I was never yet so slich
To come in any placé nigh

¹ *Storven*, died.

² *Quede*, foul one

¹ *A*, one.

Where as she was, by night or day,
That Daunger ne was redy ay,
With whom for speché ne for mede
Yet might I never of Lové spede.
For ever I this findé soth,
All that my lady saith or doth
To me Daunger shall make an ende.
And that maketh al my world mis-
wende,

And ever I axe his helpe, but he
May be wel clepéd sauns pité.
For ay the more I to him bowe,
The lasse he woll my tale allowe.
He hath my lady so engleued¹
She woll nought, that he be re-
meued.

For ever he hongeth on her saile
And is so privé of counseile,
That ever when I have ought bede,
I findé Daunger in her stede
And min answeere of him I have.
But for no mercy that I crave,
Of mercy never a point I hadde.
I find his answer ay so badde,
That worsé might it never be.
And thus between Daungér and me
Is ever werré til he deie.
But might I ben of such maistrie,
That I Daungér had overcome,
With that were all my joie come.
Thus wolde I wonde for no sinne
Ne yet for all this world to winne,
If that I mighté finde a sleight
To lay all min estate in weight
I wolde him fro the Court desever
So that he come ayeinward never,
Therefore I wisse and woldé fain
That hé were in some wisé slain,
For while he stant in thilké place
Ne gete I nought my ladies grace.
Thus hate I dedely thilké Vice
And wolde he stood in none office
In placé where my lady is.
For if he do, I wot wel this,

¹ Engleued, fastened to him.

That outhér he shall deie or I
Within a while, and nought forthy
On my lady full ofte I muse,
Now that she may her self excuse.
For if I deie in suche a plite
Me thenketh she might nought be
quite,¹

That she ne were an homicide.
And if it shuldé so betide,
As god forbede it shuldé be,
By double way it is pité.
For I, which all my Will and Wit
Have yove and servéd ever yit,
And than I shuld in suche a wise,
In rewarding of my service
Be dede, me thenketh it were routh.
And furthermore I tellé trouth,
She that hath ever be wel named,
She were worthy than to be blamed
And of resón to ben appeled,
Whan with o word she might have
heled

A man, and suffreth him to deie.
Ha, who sigh ever such a way?
Ha, who sigh ever such destresse?
Withouté pité gentillesse,
Withoute mercy womanhede,
That woll so quite² a man his mede
Whiche ever hath be to Lové trewe.

"My godé fader, if ye rewe
Upon my talé, tell me now,
And I wol stinte and herken
you."—

"My sone, attempre thy coráge
Fro Wrath and letthin hert assuage,
For who so wol him underfonge,
He may his grace abidé longe
Or he of Lové be received
And eke also, but it be weived,³
There mighté mochel thing befallé
That shuldé make a man to falle
Fro Love, that never afterwarde
Ne durst he loké thiderwarde.

¹ Quite, acquitted.

² So requite.

³ Unless it (Wrath) be put aside.

In hardé waiés men gôn softe,
And er they climbe avise hem ofte,
And men seen all day, that rape¹
reweth.

And who so wicked aic breweth
Full ofte he mot the worsé drinke;
Better it is to flete than sinke;
Better is upon the bridel chewe
Than if he fel and overthrewe
The hors and stickéd in the mire;
To casten water in the fire
Better is than brenne upal the hous.
The man whiche is malicioués
And foolhastif, full ofte he falleth.
And selden is whan Love him calleth.
Forthý better is to suffre a throwe²
Than to be wilde and overthrowe.
Suffraunce hath ever be the best
To wishen him that secheth rest.
And thus if thou wolt Lové spede,
My soné, suffre, as I the rede.
What may the mous ayein the cat?
And for this cause I axé that,
Who may to Lové make a werre,
That he ne hath him self the werre?
Love axeth pees and ever shall;
And who that fighteth most withall,
Shall lest conquere of his emprise.
For this they tellen that ben wise,
Whiche is to strive and have the
verse

To hasten, is nought worth a kerse.³
Thing that a man may nought
acheve,
That may nought wel bedone at eve,
It mot abidé till the morwe.
Ne hasté nought thine owné sorwe,
My sone, and take this in thy witte,
He hath nought lost that wel abitte.⁴
Ensample, that it falleth thus,

¹ *Rape*, haste. Icelandic "hrapa," headlong hurry. It is the word used in the phrase "rap out an oath."

² *A throwe*, for a time.

³ *Kerse*, cress.

⁴ *Abitte*, abides, waits (like our "every thing comes to him who waits").

Thou might well take of Piramus,
Whan he in haste his swerd out
drough

And on the point him selven slough
For love of Tishé pitously
For¹ he her wimpel fond bloody
And wende a beste her haddé slain,
Where as him ought have be right
faun,

For she was there al sauf beside.
But for he woldé nought abide,
This mi-chef fell. Forthý beware,
My sone, as I thee warné dare,
Do thou no thinge in suche a rees.²
For suffraunce is the well of pees,
Though thou to Lovés Court pursue,
Yet sit it wel that thou escheue
That thou the Court nought over-
haste,

For so thou might thy timé waste.
But if³ thin hap therto be shape,
It may nought helpé for to rape,
Therefore attempre thy coráge,
Foolhasté doth none avauntage,
But ofte it set a man behinde
In cause of love, and thus I finde
By olde ensample as thou shalt here
Touchend of love in this matere.

A maiden whilom there was one,
Which Daphné hight, and such was
none

Of beaute thán, as it was saide.
Phebus his love hath on her laide,
And therupon to her he sought
In his Foolhaste and so besought
That she with him no resté hadde,
For ever upon her love he gradde,⁴
And she said ever unto him nay.
So it befelle upon a day
Cupidé, whiche hath every chaunce
Of love under his gouveernaunce,
Sigh Phebus hasten him so sore,
And for he shulde him hasté more

¹ *For*, because.

³ *But if*, unless.

² *Rees*, rush.

⁴ *Gradde*, cried out.

And yet nought speden atté laste
A dart throughout his hert he caste,
Which was of golde and all a fire,
That made him many fold desire
Of lové moré than he dede.

To Daphne eke in the samé stede
A dart of led he caste and smote,
Which was all colde and no thing
hote.

And thus Phebus in lové brenneth
And in his haste abouté renneth
To loken if that he might winne.
But he was ever to beginne,
For ever away fro him she fled,
So that he never his lové sped.
And for to make him full beleve,
That no Foolhasté might acheve
To geté love in such degre,
This Daphne into a lorer tre
Was tornéd, whiche is ever grene
In token, as yet it may be sene,
That she shall dwelle a maiden stille
And Phebus failen of his wille.
By suche ensamples as they stonde,
My soné, thou might understonde
To hasten love is thing in vein
Whan that Fortúne is there ayein,
To také where a man hath leve
Good is, and ellés he mot leve.
For whan a mannés happés failen,
There is none hasté may avaien."—

"My fader, graunt mercý of this.
But while I se my lady is
No tree, but holde her owné forme,
There may me no man so enforme,
To whether part Fortúné wende,
That I unto my livés ende
Ne wol her serven evermo."—

"My soné, sithen it is so,
I say no more, but in this cas
Beware, howe it with Phebus was.
Nought only upon Lovés chaunce,
But upon every governaunce,
Which falleth unto mannés dede,
Foolhaste is ever for to drede,

And that a man good counseil take
Er he his purpose undertake,
For counseil put Foolhaste awey."—

"Now godé fader, I you prey,
That for to wissé me the more,
Some good ensample upon this lore
Ye wold me telle, of that is writ,
That I the better mighté wit,
Howe I Foolhasté shulde escheue
And the wisdome of counseil sue."—

"~~My~~ **soné**, that thou might
enforme

Thy paciéunce upon the forme
Of olde ensamples as they felle,
Nowe understond, what I shall telle.

"When noble Troié was belein
And overcome, and home ayein
The Gregois tornéd fro the sieg,
The kingés found her owné liege
In many places, as men saide,
That hem forsoke and disobcide.¹
Among the whiché fell this case
To Demephon and Athemas,
That weren kingés bothé two
And bothé weren servéd so,
Her leges wolde hem nought re-
ceive,

So that they mote alगतés weive¹
To seché londe in other place
For theré foundé they no grace.
Wherof they token hem to rede
And soughten frendés atté nede,
And eche of hem assureth other
To helpe as to his owné brother
To vengen hem of thilke oultrage
And winne ayein her heritáge.
And thus they ride abouté faste
To geten hem helpe, and atté laste
They hadden power suffisaunt
And maden than a covenant,
That they ne shuldé no life save,
Ne prest, ne clerk, ne lord, ne
knaue,
Ne wife, ne childe of that they finde

¹ *W'ive*, turn aside.

BOOK III.—WRATH.

Which bereth viságe of mannés kinde,

So that no life shall be socoured,
But with the dedelysward deuoured.
In such Foolhaste her ordinaunce
They shapen for to do vengeaunce.
Whan this purpóse was wist and knowe

Among here host, tho was there blowe

Of wordés many a speche aboute.
Of yongé men the lusty route
Were of this talé glad inough,
There was no caré for the plough;
As they that weren foolhastif
They ben accorded to the strife
And sain, it may nought bent to great
To vengen hem of such forfét.
Thus saith the wilde unwise tonge
Of hem that theré weren yonge.

“But Nestor, which was olde here,

The salvé sigh to-forc the sore
As he that was of counseil wise.
So that anone by his advise
There was a privé counseil nonié,
The lordés ben to-gider come.

“This Demeophon and Athemas
Her purpos tolden as it was,
They setten allé still and herde,
Was non but Nestor hem answerde.
He badde hem, if they wolden winne,
They shulden se, er they beginne,
Her ende and set her first entent
That they hem after ne repent,
And axeth hem this question,
To what fináll conclusion
They woldé regné kingés there,
If that no people in londé were?
And saith, it were a wonder wierd¹
To seen a king become an hierd,
Where no life is but only beste
Under the legeaunce of his heste.²

¹ *Wierd*, destiny.

² Only beasts under allegiance to his command.

For who that is of man no kinge
The remenaunt is as no thinge.

He saith eke, if they pourpose holde
To sleethe the people, as they two wolde,
Whan they it mighté nought restore,
All Grece it shulde abegge sore¹
To se the wildé besté wone²

Where whilom dwelt a mannés sone.
And for that cause he bad hem trete
And stint of tho manáces grete.

‘Bet is to winne by fairé speche,’
He saith, ‘than such vengeaúncé seche.

For whan a man is most above,
Him nedeth most to gete him love.’

“Whan Nestor hath this talé saide,

Ayein him was no word withsaide;
It thought hem all he saidé welc;
And thus Fortúne her dedly whele
Fro weiré torneth into pees.

But forth they wenten nethéles,
And whan the contrees herdé sain,
How that her kingés be besein
Of suche a power as they laddé,
Was none so bold that hem nedradde
And for to seché pees and grith³
They sende and praide anon forth-
with,

So that the kingés ben appesed
And every mannés hert is esed.
All was foryete and nought recorded,
And thus they bent to-gider accorded.
The kingés were ayein received,
And pees was take and wrathé weived

And all through counseil which was good

Of him that reson understood.

“By this ensample, sone, at-
tempre

Thin hert and let no Will distempre

¹ *Abegge sore*, abyee,—pay for—it sorely.

² *Wone*, dwell.

³ *Grith* was a secured interval of peace;
“grith” was peace generally.

Thy Wit, and do no thing by might,
Which may be do by love and
right,

Foolhaste is cause of mochel wo,
Forthy my soné, do nought so.
And as touchend of homicide,
Which toucheth unto Lovés side,
Ful ofte it falleth unaviséd
Through Will which is nought wel
assised,

Whan Wit and Reson ben away
And that Foolhaste is in the wey,
Wherof hath fallé great venge-
aunce.

Forthy take into remembraunce
To love in suche a maner wise,
That thou deservé no juisse.
For well I wol, thou might nought
lette,

That thou ne shalt thin herté sette
To lové, where ¹ thou wolt or none.
But if thy wit be overgone,
So that it torne unto malice,
There wot no man of thilké Vice.
What perill that there may befallé.
Wherof a tale amongés alle
Whiche is great pité for to here
I thenké for to tellen here,
That thou such mordre might with-
stonde,

Whan thou the tale hast under-
stonde.

Of Troie at thilké noble towne,
Whose famé stant yet of renowne
And ever shall to mannés ere,
The siegé lasté longé there
Er that the Grekes it mighté winne,
While Priamús was king therinne.
But of the Grekes that lien aboute,
Agámenon lad all the route.
This thinge is known overall,
But yet I thenke in speciall
To my matéré therupon
Telle in what wise Agámenon

Through chauncé which may nought
be weived

Of love untrewé was deceived.
An oldé sawe is : who that is sligh
In placé where he may be nigh
He maketh the ferré levé loth ¹
Of love, and thus ful ofte it goth.
There while Agámenon bátáilleth
To winné Troie and it assaileth
From home and was long, timé fer,
Egistus drough his quené ner
And with the leiser whiche he hadde
This lady at his will he ladde.
Climestré was her righté name,
She was therof greatly to blame
To lové there it may nought laste,
But fell to mischefe atté laste.
For whan this noble worthy knight
Fro Troié came, the firsté night
That he at home a beddé lay
Egistus longe er it was day,
As this Climestre him had assent
And weren bothe of one assent,
By treson slough him in his bed.
But morder, which may nought ben
hed,

Sprong out to every mannés ere,
Wherof the lond was full of fere.

Agámenon hath by this quene
A sone, and that was after sene.
But yet as than he was of youth
A babé which no reson couth.
And as God wolde, it felle him thus,
A worthy knight Taltibius
This yongé childe hath in keeping.
And whan he herde of this tidíng,
Of this tresón, of this misdede,
He gan within him self to drede
In aunter if this false Egiste
Upon him come er he it wiste
To take and morder of his malice
This child whiche he hath to norice;
And for that cause in allé haste

¹ The cunning man who can come near makes
loathed the loved one who is farther off.

¹ *Where*, whether.

Out of the londe he gan him haste
 And to the kinge of Crete he straught
 And him this yongé lorde betaught¹
 And praid him for his faders sake,
 That he this child wolde undertake
 And kepe him till he be of age,
 So as he was of his lignage,
 And told him over all the cas,
 How that his fader morthred was,
 And how Egistus, as men saide,
 Wasking, to whom the londe obeide.

"And whan Ydomeneus the kinge
 Hath understanding of this thinge,
 Which that this knight him haddé
 told,

He madé sorwé manyfold
 And toke the childe unto his warde
 And saide he wolde him kepe and
 warde,

Till that he were of such a might
 To handle aswerde and ben a knight
 To venge him at his owné will.
 And thus Horestes dwelleth still,
 Such was the childés righté name,
 Whiche after wroughté mochel
 shame

In vengeance of his faders deth.

"The time of yerés overgeth
 That he was man of briede and
 lengthe,

Of wit, of manhode, and of strengthe,
 A fair persone amongés alle.

And he began to clepe and caile
 As he which comé was to man,
 Unto the kinge of Creté than
 Praiéndé that he wold him make
 A knight and power with him take,
 For lenger wolde he nought beleve,²
 He saith, but praith the kinge of
 leve

To gone and claim his heritáge
 And vengen him of thilke oultráge
 Which was unto his fader do.
 The kinge assenteth well therto

¹ *Betaught*, entrusted.

² *Beleve*, remain.

With great honoúr and knight him
 maketh

And great powér to him betaketh.¹

And gan his journé for to caste

So that Horestes atté laste

His levé toke and forth he goth

As he that was in herté wroth.

His firsté pleinté to bernené²

Unto the citee of Athene

He goth him forth and was re-
 ceived,

So theré was he nought deceived.

The duke and tho that weren wise

They profren hem to his servíce,

And he hem thonketh of her proffer

And saith him self he wol gone offer

Unto the goddés for his spede,

And allé men him yivé redc.

So goth he to the temple forth,

Of yiftés that be mochel worth

His sacrifice and his offringé

He made. And after his axunge

He was answerde, if that he wolde

His state recover, than he sholde

Upon his moder do vengeance

So cruel, that the rémembraunce

Therof might evermore abide,

As she that was an homicide

And of her owné lord mordrice.

Horestes, whiche of thilke office

Was nothing glad, as than he
 praide

Unto the goddés there and saide,

That they the jugément devise,

How she shall také the júise.³

And therupon he had answevé,

That he her pappés shulde of-tere

Out of her breast his owné hondes,

And for ensample of allé londes

With hors she shuldé be to-drawe,

Till houndés had her bonés gnawe

Withouten any sepulture.

This was a wofull aventure.

¹ *Betaketh*, entrusted. ² *Bernené*, bemoan.

³ *Júise*, judgment (judicium).

"And whan Horestes hath all
herde,
How that the goddés have an-
swérde,
Forth with the strengthé whiche he
lad,
The duke and his powér he had
And to a citee forth they gone,
The which was clepéd Crophcone,
Where as Phorcús was lord and sirc,
Which profreth him withouten hire
His helpe and all that he may do,
As he that was right glad therto
To grev: his mortal enemy,
And tolde him certain causé why,
How that Egiste in mariáge
His doughter whilom of full age
Forlay and afterward forsoke.
Whan he Horestes moder toke.
Men sain : old sinné newé shame.
Thus more and more arose the blame
Ayein Egiste on every side.

"Horestes with his host to ride
Began, and Phorcus with him wente,
I trowe Egist him shall repente.
They riden forth unto Micene,
There lay Climestré thilké quene,
The whiche Horestes moder is.
And whan she herdé telle of this,
The gatés weré fasté shette,
And they were of her entré lette.¹
Anone this citee was withoute
Belain and siegéd all aboute,
And ever among they it assaile
Fro day to night, and so travaile
Till atté lasté they it wonne;
Tho was there sorwe inough be-
gonne.

"Horestes did his moder calle
Anone to-fore the lordés alle
And eke to-fore the people also,
To her and tolde his talé tho
And saide: 'O cruel beste unkinde,
How mightest thou thin herté finde,

¹ Hindered from entering.

For any luste of lovés draught
That thou accordest to the slaught
Of him which was thin owné lorde?
Thy treson stant of such recorde,
Thou might thy werkés nought
forsake,

So mote I for my faders sake
Vengeaunce upon thy body do,
As I commaunded am therto.
Unkindély for thou hast wrought,
Unkindélich it shall be bought :
The soné shall the moder slee,
For that whilom thou saidest ye
To that thou shuldest nay have said.¹
And he with that his honds hath laid
Upon his moder breast anone
And rent out from the baré bone
Her pappés both and caste away
Amiddés in the carté way,
And after toke the dedé cors
And lete it be drawe away with hors
Unto the hounde, unto the raven,
She was none other wise graven.¹

"Egistus, which was ellés where.
Tidingés comen to his ere,
How that Micené was belain,
But what was more herd he nought
sain.

With great manúce and mochel boste
He droughpowér and made an hoste
And came in the rescousse² of the
town.

But all the sleight of his tresón
Horestes wist it by a spie
And of his men a great partie
He made in busshément abide
To waite³ on him in suche a tide,
That he ne might her hond escape.
And in this wise as he hath shape
The thing befell, so that Egist
Was take er he him selfe it wist,
And was forth brought his hondés
bonde,

¹ Graven, buried. ² Rescoussé, rescue.

³ Waite, watch.

As whan men have a traitor fonde.
And tho that weren with him take,
Whiche of tresón were overtake,
To-gider in one sentence falle.
But false Egiste above hem alle
Was deméd to diversé peine,
The worsté that men couthe ordeigne,

And so forth after by the lawe
He was unto the gibet drawe,
Where he above all other hongeth,
As to a traitor it belongeth.

The Famé with her swifeté winges
Abouté fliþ and bare tidinges
And made it couth in allé londres,
How that Horestes with his hondres
Climestre his owné moder slough.
Somé sain, he did well inough,
And somé sain, he did amis,

Divers opiniõ there is ;
That she is dede they speken alle,
But plainly howe it is befallé
The matere in so litel throwe¹

In sothé there might no man knowe
But they that weren at the dede.

And comunlich in every nede
The worsté speche is rathest herde
And levéd,² till it be answerde.

The kingés and the lordés great
Begonne Horestes for to threat
To putten him out of his regne,—

He is nought worthy for to regne,
The child which slough his moderso,
They said ; and therupon also

The lordés of común assent
The timé sette of parlément,

And to Athenés king and lorde
To-gider come of one accorde,
To knowe how that the sothé was,

So that Horestes in this cas
They senden after, and he come.

“ King Menelay the wordés nome
And axeth him of this matere.
And he, that all it mighten here,

¹ In so short a time. ² Levéd, believed.

Answerde and tolde his tale at large,
And how the goddés in his charge
Commaunded him in suche a wise
His owné hond to do juise.¹

And with this tale a duke arose,
Which was a worthy knight of lose,²
His namé was Menesteús,
And saide unto the lordés thus :
‘ The wreché³ whiche Horestes
dede,

It was thinge of the goddés bede
And nothinge of his cruelté :

And if there were of my degre
In all this placé suche a knight
That woldé sain it was no right,
I wold it with my body prove.’

And therupon he cast his glove
And eke this noble duke alleide
Full many an other skill⁴ and saide,

She haddé well deservéd wreche,⁵
First for the cause of spouse breche,⁶

And after wrought in suche a wise,
That all the woulde it ought agrise,⁶

Whan that she for so foul a vice
Was of her owné lord mordrice.

They sitten allé still and herde,
But therto was no man answeide,

It thought hem all he saidé skille,
There is no man withsay it wille.

Whan they upon the reson musen
Horestes allé they excusen,

So that with great solempnité
He was unto his dignité

Receivéd and coronéd kinge.
And tho befell a wonder thinge.

Egiona whan she it wiste,
Which was the doughter of Egiste

And suster on the moder side
To this Horest, at thilké tide,

Whan she herde how her brother
sped,

For puré sorwé whiche her led,

¹ Juise, judgment.

² Lose, praise, fame.

³ Wreche, vengeance

⁴ Alleged . . . reason.

⁵ Spouse breche, adultery.

⁶ Agrise, to terrify.

That he ne haddé ben exiled,
 She hath her owné life beguiled
 Anone and henge her selfé tho.
 It hath and shall ben evermo
 To mordre who that woll assente
 He may nought failé to repente.
 This false Egiona was one
 Whiché to mordre Agámenon
 Yaf her accorde and her assent,
 So that by goddés jugement,
 Though other noné man it wolde,
 She toke her juise as she sholde,
 And as she to an other wrought
 Vengeaunce upon her self she sought
 And hath of her unhappy wit
 A modre with a modre quit.
 Suche is of modre the vengeaunce.

“Forthy my sone, in remem-
 braunce

Of this ensample take good hede.
 For who that thenketh his lovéspede
 With mordre, he shall with worldés
 shame

Him self and eke his lovéshame.”—

“My fader, of this aventure,
 Whiche ye have tolde, I you assure
 My herte is sory for to here;
 But onely for I woldé lere
 What is to done and what to leve,
 And over this now by your leve.
 That ye me woldé telle I pray,
 If there be leful any way
 Withouté sinne a man may slec.”—

“My sone, in sondry wisé ye.
 What man that is of traierie
 Of mordre or ellés robberie
 Atteint, the jugé shal not let
 But he shal seen of puré det²
 And doth great sinne if that he
 wonde.³

For who, that lawe hath upon honde,
 And spareth for to do justice
 For mercy, doth nought his office,

That he his mercy so bewareth,¹
 Whan for o shrewé, whiche he
 spareth,

A thousand godé men he greveth;
 With such mercý who that beleveth
 To plesé God, he is deceived
 Or ellés reson mot be weived.
 The lawé stode or² we were bore,
 How that a kingés swerde is bore
 In signé that he shall defende
 His trué people and make an ende
 Of suche, as wolden hem devour.

“Lo, thus my soné, to succour
 The lawe, and comun right to winne,
 A man may³ slec withouté sinne
 And do therof a great almesse
 So for to kepé rightwisnesse.
 And over this³ for his contree
 In time of werre a man is free
 Him self, his house, and eke his
 londe

Defendé with his owné hondé
 And sleen, if that he may no bet,
 After the lawé whiche is set.”—

“Now fader, than I you besече
 Of hem that dedly werres seche
 In worldés cause and sheden blood,
 If suche an homicide is good?”—

“My sone, upon thy question
 The trouth of min opiniön,
 Als ferforth as my wit archeth
 And as the pleiné lawé techeth,
 I wol thee telle in evidence
 To reulé with thy consciënce.

The highé god of his justice
 That ilké foul horrible Vice
 Of Homicide he hath forbede
 By Moises, as it was bede.
 Whan Goddés sone also was bore
 He sent his aungel down therfore,
 Whom the shephérds herden singe:
 ‘Pees to the men of welwillinge
 In erthé be amonge us here.’

¹ Ye, yea.

² Det, debt, obligation.

³ Wonde, turn aside.

¹ Bewareth, expends

² Or, ere.

³ Over this, beyond this.

So for to speke in this matére
 After the lawe of charité,
 There shall no dedly werré be.
 And eke Nature it hath defended
 And in her lawé Pees commended,
 Whiche is the chefe of mannés welth,
 Of mannés life, of mannés helth.
 But dedly Werre hath his covíne
 Of Pestilence and of Famíne,
 Of Pouerte and of allé wo,
 Wherof this world we blamen so
 Which now the werre hath under
 fote,

Till God him self therof do bote.¹
 For allé thing, which God hath
 wrought,

Inerthé, Werre it bringeth to nought.
 The chirche is brent, the prest is
 slain,

The wife, the maide is eke forlain.
 The lawe is lore and God unserved:
 I not² what mede he hath deserved,
 That suché werrés ledeth inne.
 If that he do it for to winne,
 First to accompte his greté coste,
 Forth with the folke that he hath
 loste

As to the worldés rekeníngé,
 There shall he findé no winnínge.
 And if he do it to purcháce
 The heaven, mede of suche a grace
 I can nought speké, nethéles
 Crist hath commaunded Love and
 Pees.

And who that worcheth the revers,
 I trowe his mede is full divers.
 And sithen thanné that we finde,
 That weirés in her owné kinde
 Ben toward God of no deserte
 And eke they bringen in pouerte
 Of worldés good, it is merveile
 Among the men what it may eile
 That they a pees ne connen sette.
 I trowé Sinné be the lette,

¹ Do bote, cause remedy. ² Not, know not.

And every mede of Sinne is deth.
 So wote I never howe it geth.
 But we, that ben of o¹ beleve
 Among us self, this wolde I leve,²
 That better it were Pees to chese
 Than so by double weíe lese.

I not if that it now so stonde,
 But this a man may undeistonde,
 Who that these oldé bokés redeth,
 That covetise is one which ledeth
 And broughté first the werrés inne.
 At Grece if that I shall beginne,
 There was it provéd howe it stood
 To Persé. whiche was full of good.
 They maden werre in speciall
 And so they didden over all
 Where great richessé was in londe,
 So that they leften nothing stonde
 Unwerréd, but onliche Archade.

For theré they no werrés made
 Because it was barein and pouer,
 Wherof they mighté nought recouer
 And thus pouerté was forboré,
 He that nought had nought hath
 loré.

But yet it is a wonder thinge,
 Whan that a riché worthy kinge
 Or other lord, what so he be,
 Woll axe and claimé properté
 In thing to whiche he hath no right
 But only of his greté might.
 For this may every man well wite,
 That bothé Kinde and Lawé wite
 Expressly stonden there ayein.
 But he not nedés somewhat sain,
 All though there be no reson inne.
 Which secheth causé for to winne.
 For Wit that is with Will oppressed.
 Whan covetise him hath adressed
 And allé reson put away,
 He can well findé such a way
 To werré where as ever him liketh,
 Wherof that he the worde entriketh,³

¹ O, one.

² I leve, believe.

³ Entriketh, deceives by intrigue.

That many a man of him compleigneth.

But yet alway some cause he feigneth

And of his wrongfull herte he demeth

That all is well what ever him semeth

Be so that he may winne inough.

For as the true man to the plough

Only to the gaignage entendeth,

Right so the werriour despendeth

His time and hath no conscience.

And in this point for evidence

Of hem that suché werrés make,

Thou might a great ensample take

How they her tirannie excusen

Of that they wrongful werrés usen,

And how they stonde of one accorde,

The souldéour forth with the lorde,

The pouér man forth with the riche,

As of coragé they ben liche

To maké werrés and to pille

For lucre and for none other skille,¹

Wherof a propre tale I rede,

As it whilom befelle in dede,

“Of him, whom all this erthe dradde

Whan he the world so overladde

Through werré, as it fortunéd is,

King Alisaundre, I redé this,

How in a marché where he lay

It fell parchaunce upon a day

A rover of the see was nome,²

Which many a man had overcome

And slain and take her good away.

This pilour as the bokés say,

A famous man in sondry stede

Was of the werkés whiche he dede.

This prisoner to-fore the kinge

Was brought, and therupon this thinge

In audiéce he was accused,

And he his dede hath nought excused

And praid the king to done him right

And said : ‘Sire, if I were of might,

I have an herté liche to thine ;

For if thy power weré mine,

My wille is most in speciall

To rifle and geten over all

The largé worldés good about.

But for I lede a pouer route

And am as who saith at myschefe,

The name of pilour and of these

I bere, and thou which routés great

Might lede and také thy beyete¹

And dost right as I woldé do,

Thy name is nothing clepéd so,

But thou art naméd emperour.

Our dedés ben of one colour

And in effecte of one deserte,

But thy richesse and my pouérte

They be nought taken evenliche,*

And nethéles he that is riche

This day, to morwe he may be pouer,

And in contrarie also recouer

A pouer man to greté richesse.

Men sain forthy let rightwisenesse

Be peisé even in the balaúnce.’

“The king his hardy contenance

Behelde, and herd his wordés wise,

And said unto him in this wise :

‘Thin answeré I have understonde,

Wherof my will is, that thou stonde

In my servíce and stille abide.’

And forth with al the same tide

He hath him terme of life witholde

The more and for he shuld ben bolde,

He made him knight and yaf him

lond,

Whiche afterward was of his honde

An orpéd² knight in many a stede

And great prowésse of armés dede,

As the cronqués it recorden,

And in this wisé they accorden,

The whiche of her condición

Be set upon destruction,

¹ Skille, reason.

² Nome, taken.

¹ Beyete, gains.

² Orpéd, distinguished.

Such capitain such retenue.¹
 But for to see to what issue
 The king befaller at the laste,
 It is great wonder that men caste
 Her herte upon such wrong to winne
 Where no beyeté may ben inne
 And doth disese on every side;
 But whan Resón is put aside
 And Will govérneth the coráge,
 The faucon which fleéth ramáge²
 And suffreth no thing in the way
 Wherof that he may take his pray,
 Is nought more set upon ravine
 Than thilké man whiche his covine
 Hath set in suche a maner wise.
 For all the world ne may suffice
 To Wil wilhe is nought reson-
 áble.

Wherof ensample concordáble
 Lich to this point of which I mene
 Was upon Alisaundre sene,
 Whiche haddé set all his entent
 So as Fortúné with him went,
 That Reson might him non govérne,
 But of his Wille he was so sterne,
 That all the worlde he overran
 And what him list he toke and wan.
 In Yndé the superioúr
 Whan that he was full conqueroúr
 And had his wilfull pourpos wonne
 Of all this erth under the sonne,
 This king homward to Macedoine
 Whan that he cam to Babiloine
 And wendé moste in his empire,
 As he which was hole lorde and
 sire,

In honour for to be received,
 Most sodenliche he was deceived
 And with strong poison evenímed.
 And as he hath the worlde mistimed
 Nought as he shuldé with his wit,
 Nought as he wolde it was acquit.
 Thus was he slain that whilom
 slough,

¹ Like master like man.

² *Ramge*, wild.

And he which riché was inough
 This day, to morwe he haddénought.
 And in such wise as he hath wrought
 In disturbaunce of worldés pees,
 His werre he fond than endéles,
 In which for ever discomfite
 He was. Lo, now for what profite
 Of werre it helpeth for to ride,
 For covetise and worldés pride
 To slec the worldés men aboute
 As bestés, whiche gone there oute.
 For every life which reson can¹
 Oweth wel to knowé that a man
 Ne shuldé through no tirannie
 Lich to these other bestés deie
 Til Kindé² woldé for him sende.
 I not how he it might amende
 Which taketh away for evermore
 The life that he may nought restore.

“Forthy my sone, in allé wey
 Be wel aviséd I thee prey
 Of slaughter that thou be coupáble
 Withouté causé resonáble.”—

“My fader, understonde it is,
 That ye have said, but over this
 I pray you telle me nay or ye,
 To passe over the greaté see
 To werre and sle the Sarasin
 Is that the lawé?”—“Soné min,
 To preche and suffre for the feith
 That I have herd the gospel saith,—
 But for to sle, that here I nought.
 Crist with his ownédeth hath bought
 All other men and made hem fre
 In token of parfit charité,
 And after³ that he taught him selve
 Whan he was dede these othertwelve
 Of his apostles went aboute
 The holy feith to prechen oute,
 Wherof the deth in sondry place
 They suffre, and so God of his grace
 The feith of Crist hath made arise.
 But if they wolde in other wise

¹ Everybody capable of reason.

² *Kindé*, Nature.

³ *After*, according to.

By werre have brought in the
creaunce,
It haddé yet stonde in balaunce.
And that may proven in the dede ;
For what man the cronqués rede,
Fro first that Holy Chirche hath
weived¹
To preche and hath the swerd re-
ceived,
Wherof the werrés ben begonne,
A great partie of that was wonne
To Cristés feith stant now miswent.
God do therof amendément
So as he wot what is the best.
But sone, if thou wilt live in rest
Of consciencé well assised,
Er that thou slee, be wel avised ;
For man, as tellen us the clerkes,
Hath God above all erthly werkes
Ordeigné to be principáll,
And eke of soule in speciáll
He is made lich to the godhede :
So sit it wel to taken hede
And for to loke on every side
Er that thou falle on homicide,
Which sinne is now so generall
That it wel nigh stant overall
In Holy Chirche and elles where.
But all the while it is so there,
The world mot nedé fare amis.
For whan the well of pité is
Through covetise of worldés good
Defouléd with sheding of blood,
The remenaunte of folke about
Unnethé stonde in any doubt
To werre eche other and to slee,
So it is all nought worth a stre;²
The Charité wherof we prechen,
For we do no thing as we techen.
And thus the blindé conscience
Of Pees hath lost thilke evidence
Which Crist upon this erthé taught.
Now may men se mordre and man-
slaught

¹ *Weived*, put aside.² *Stre*, straw.

Liche as it was by daiés olde,
Whan men the sinnés bought and
solde.

“ *In Grece* aforé Cristés feith,
I rede as the cronqué saith
Touchend of this matéré thus,
In thilké time how Peleús
His owné brother Phocus slough.
But for he haddé gold inough
To yive; his sinné was despensed
With golde wherof it waś com-
pensed.

Achastus, which with Venus was
Her prest, assoiléd¹ in that cas
Al weré there no répentaunce.
And as the boke maketh rémem-
braunce,

It telleth of Medee also,
Of that she slough her sonés two
Egeús in the samé plite
Hath made her of her sinné quite.²
The sone eke of Amphíoras,
Whose righté name Almeús was,
His moder slough Eriphelé,
But Achilo the prest and he,
So as the bokés it recorden,
For certain some of golde accorden
That thilke horrible sinfull dede
Assoiléd was; and thus for mede
Of worldés good it falleth ofte,
That homicide is set alofte
Here in this life : but after this
There shall be knowe, how that it is
Of hem that suché thingés wirche,
And how also that Holy Chirche
Let suché sinnés passé quite,
And how they wolde hem self acquite
Of dedely werrés, that they make.
For who that wold ensample take,
The lawé which is naturel,
By wey of Kindé sheweth wel
That homicide in no degre
Which werreth aycin charité
Among the menné shuldé dwelle.

¹ *Assoiléd*, absolved. ² *Quite*, acquitted.

For after that the bokés telle,
To seche in all the worldé riche
Men shall nought finde upon his
liche¹

A besté for to take his prey,
And sithen Kind hath suche a wey,
Than is it wonder of a man,
Which kindé hath and reson can,
That he woll outhér more or lasse
His kinde and reson overpasse
And slee that is to him sembláble.
So is the man nought resonáble
Ne kinde, and that is nought
honéste,

Whan he is worsé thán a beste.

“Among the bokés which I finde
Solins speketh of a wonder kinde
And saith of foulés there is one,
Whiche hath a face of blood and
• bone

Like to a man in ressemblaunce.
And if it fallé so parchaunce,
As he whiche is a foule of pray,
That he a man finde in his way,
He woll him sleen if that he may.
But afterward the samé day
Whan he hath eten all his felle
And that shall be beside a wellé
In whiché he woll drinké take
Of his viságe and seeth the make
That he hath slain, anone he
thenketh

Of his misdede, and it forthenketh
So greatly that for puré sorwe
He liveth nought till on the morwe.
By this ensample it may well sue,
That man shall homicide escheue,
For ever is mercy good to take.
But if the lawe it hath forsake
And that justíce is there aycin,
Ful offtime I have herd sain
Amongés hem that werrés hadden,
That they somwhile her causé
ladden

¹ Upon his own kind.

By mercy, whan they might have
slain,

Wherof that they were after sain.
And sone, if that thou wolt recorde
The vertue of misericorde,
Thou sighé never thilké place,
Where it was uséd lacké grace;
For every lawe and every kinde
The mannés wit to mercy binde,
And namély the worthy knightes,
Whan that they stonden most up-
rightes

And ben most mighty for to greve,
They shulden thanné most releve
Him whom they mighten over-
throwe,

And by ensample a man may
knowe

He may nought failen of his mede
That hath mercy. For this I rede.

In a cronique I findé thus,
Whan Achillés with Thelaphus
His soné toward Troié were,
It fell hem er they comen there
Aycin Theucér the kinge of Mese
To maké werre and for to sese
His lond as they that wolden regne
And Theucer put out of his regne.
And thus the marches they assaile,
But Theucer yaf to hem bataile.
They foughten on both sidés faste,
But so it hapneth atté laste
This worthy Greke this Achillés
The king amonge all other ches,
As he that was cruél and felle,
With swerd in honde on him hefelle
And smote him with a dethés
wounde,

That he unhorséd fell to grounde.
Achilles upon him alight
And wolde anone, as he wei might,
Have slain him fullliche in the place,
But Thelaphus his faders grace
For him besought, and for pité
Praith that he woldé let him be,

And cast his shield betwene hem
two.

Achilles axeth him why so.
And Thelaphus his causé tolde
And saith, that he is mochel holde,
For whilom Theucer in a stede
Great grace and socour to him dede,
And saith that he him wolde acquite
And praith his fader to respite,
Achilles tho withdrough his honde ;
But all the power of the londe
Whan that they sigh her king thus
take

They fled and han the feld forsake.
The Grekes unto the chacé fallé
And for the mosté part of alle
Of that contré the lordés great
They toke and wonne a great beyete.
Anone after this victorie,
The king, whiche haddé memorie,
Upon the greté mercy thought
Which Thelaphus toward him
wrought,

And in preséncé of all the londe
He toke him fairé by the honde
And in this wise he gan to say :
' My sone, I mot by double way
Love and desiré thin encrees,
First for thy fader Achilles
Whilom full many a day ere this
Whan that I shulde have fare amis
Rescoussé did in my quarele
And kept all min estate in hele,
How so there fallé now distaünce
Amongés us, yet rémembraünce
I have of mercy whiche he dede
As than, and thou nowé in this stede
Of gentilesse and of fraunchise
Hast do mercý the samé wise ;
So woll I nought that any timé
Be lost of that thou hast do by me,
For how so this fortuné falle
Yet stant my truste aboven alle,
For the mercý whiche now I finde,
That thou wolt after this be kinde ;

And for that suche is min espeir
And for my sone and for min heire
I thec receive, and all my londe
I yive and sese into thin honde.'
And in this wisé they accorde,
The causé was misericorde,
The lordes do her obeisaünce
To Thelaphus, and purveaünce
Was madé so that he was coróned
And thus was mercy reguerdóned
Whiche he to Theucer did to-fore.

" Lo, this ensample is made
therfore,
That thou might také rémem-
braunce,
My sone, and, whan thou seest a
chaunce,
Of other mennés passiön
Take pité and compassion,
And let nothing to the be lef
Which to another man is gref.
And after this if thou desire
To stonde ayein the Vice of Ire,
Counseilé thee with paciëncé
And take into thy consciëncé
Mercý to be thy governour,
So shalt thou felé no rancour,
Wherof thin herté shall debate
With Homicidé ne with hate
For Cheste or for Maléncolie.
Thou shalt be softe in compaignie
Withouté Contek or Foolhaste,
For ellés might thou longé waste
Thy time, er that thou have thy wille
Of Lové ; for the weder stille
Men preise, and blamé the tem-
pestes."—

" My fader, I woll do your hestes,
And of this point ye have me taught
Toward my self the better saught¹
I thinké be while that I live.
But for als mochel as I am shrive
Of Wrath and all his circumstaunce,
Yef what ye list to my penaunce

¹ *Saught*, reconciled.

And axeth further of my life,
If other wise I be giltif
Of any thing, that toucheth sinne.”—

“My sone, er we depart a twinne,¹
I shall behindé no thing leve.”—

“My gode fader, by your leve
Than axeth forth what so ye liste,
For I have in you such a triste²
As ye that be my soulé hele,
That ye fro me nothing wol hele,³
For I shall tellé you the trouthe.”—

“My sone, art thou coulpatible of
Slouthe
In any point, which to him long-
eth?”—

“My fader, of tho points me
longeth⁴

¹ A twinne, separated. ² Triste, trust.

³ Hele, conceal.

⁴ I long to know plainly.

To wité plainly what they mene,
So that I may me shrivé clene.”—

“Now herken, I shal tho points
devise,

And understond well min apprise.

For shrifté stant of no valúe

To him that woll him nought
vertue

To leve of Vicé the folie,

For worde is wind, but the mais-
trie

Is that a man him self defende

Of thing whiche is nought to com-
mende,

Whereof ben fewé now a day.

And nethéles so as I may

Make unto thy mémorie know

The points of Slouthé thou shalt
knowe.

Book IV.

OF SLOTH.

Upou the Vices to procede
After the cause of mannés
dede

The firsté point of Slouth I calle
Lachesse,¹ and is the chefe of alle
And hath this properlich of kind
To leven allé thing behind,
Of that he mighté do nowé here
He tarieth all the longé yere
And evermore he saith : ‘To mor-
we,’

And so he woll his timé borwe
And wishheth after: God mesende,²
That whan he weneth have an ende,
Than is he furthest to beginne.
Thus bringeth he many a mischefe
inne

Unware, till that he be mischéved
And may nought thanné be releved.
And right so nouthé more ne lesse
It stant of Love and of Lachesse.
Some time he sloutheth on a day,
That he never after geté may.

“Now, sone, as of this ilké thing
If thou have any knouleching
That thou to Love hast done er this,
Tell on.”—“My godé fader, yis.
As of Lachesse I am beknowe,
That I may stonde upon his rowe,
As I that am clad of his suite,
For whanne I thoughté my pursuite
To make, and therto set a day

To speke unto that sweté may,¹
Lachesse bad abidé yit
And bare on honde it was no Wit
Ne timé for to speke as tho.²
Thus with his talés to and fro
My time in tarieng he drough;
Whan there was timé good inough,
He said another time is better,
Thou shalt now senden her a letter
And par cas writé moré plein
Than thou by mouthé durstest sain.
Thus have I letté timé slide
For slouthé, and kepté nought my
tide,

So that Lachesse with his vice
Full oft hath made my wit so nice,
That what I thought to speke or do
With tarieng he held me so
Til whan I wolde and mighté
nought.

I not what thing was in my thought
Or it was drede, or it was shame,
But ever in earnest and in game
I wit there is long timé passed,
But yet is nought the lové lassed,
Whiche I unto my lady have;
For though mytunge is slow to crave
At allé time, as I have bede,
Min hert stant ever in o stede
And axeth besiliché grace,
The whiche I may nought yet em-
brace,

¹ *Lachesse*, slackness. ² For a god-end.

¹ *May*, maid.

² *Tho*, then.

And god wot that is malgré min.
For this I wot right well afin,¹
My gracie cometh so selde aboute,
That is the Slouthé, which I doubté
More than of all the remenaunt
Whiche is to Love appartenaunt.

“And thus as touchend of Lachesse,

As I have tolde, I me confesse
To you, my fader; I beseeche
That furthermore ye wol me teche,
And if there be to this matere
Some goodly talé for to here,
How I may do Lachesse away,
That ye it wolden telle, I prey.”—

“To wissé the, my sone, and rede,²
Among the talés whiche I rede,
An olde ensample therupon
Now herken, and I wol telle on.

“**Ayein lachesse** in Lovés cas
I finde, how whilom Eneás,
Whom Anchisés to soné hadde,
With great navié, which he ladde,
Fro Troie arriveth at Cartage.
Wherefore a while his herbergage
He toke, and it betidde so
With her which was a quené tho
Of the citee, his ácqueintaunce
He wan, whos name in remem-
braunce

Is yet, and Dido was she hote,
Which loveth Énéas so hote
Upon the wordés whiche he saide,
That all her hert on him she laide
And did all holy what he wolde.
But after that, as it be sholde,
Fro thenne he goth toward Itaile
By ship and there his arrivaile
Hath take and shope him for to
ride.

But she, which may nought longe
abide

The hoté peine of lovés throwe,”

¹ Afin, at last. ² Rede, counsel.
³ Throuwe, throe.

Anon within a litel throwe¹
A letter unto her knight hath writé
And did him plainly for to wite
If he made any tarieng
To drecche² of his ayein comming,
That she ne might him fele and se,
She shuldé stonde in such degre
As whilom stood a swan to-fore
Of that she hadde her maké lore³
For sorwe a fether into her brain.
She shof and hath her selvé slain.
As king Menander in a lay
The soth hath foundé, where she lay
Spraulend with her wingés twey
As she which shuldé thanné deie
For love of him which was her make.
And so shal I do for thy sake
This quené saidé, wel I wote.

“Lo, to Encü thus she wrote
With many another word of pleint.
But he which had his thoughtés feint
Towardés Love and full of Slouthé,
His timé let, and that was routhe.
For she, which loveth him to-fore,
Desireth ever more and more
And whan she sigh him tary so,
Her herté was so full of wo,
That compleignend manyfolde
She hath her owné talé tolde
Unto her self and thus she spake:
‘Ha, who found ever suche a lacké
Of Slouth in any worthy knight?
Now wote I well my deth is dight
Through him, which shuld have be
my life.’

But for to stinten all this strife
Thus whan she sigh none other bote,
Right even unto her herté rote
A naked sward anone she threste
And thus she gat her selvé reste
In remembraunce of allé slowe.

“Wherof, my soné, thou might
knowe,

¹ Throuwe, space of time. ² Drecche, delay.
³ Maké lore, lost her mate.

How tarieng upon the nede
In Lovés cause is for to drede.
And that hath Dido sore aboutt,
Whosedethshall ever be bethought.
And evermore if I shal seche
In this matere another speche
In a cronique I finde write
A talé, whiche is good to wite.

“**At Troie** whan king Ylixés
Upon the siege, among the pres
Of hem that worthy knightés were,
Abodé long time stillé there,
In thilké time a man may se,
How goodly that Penelope,
Which was to him his trowé wife,
Of his Lachessé was pleintife,
Wherof to Troie she him sende
Her will by letter, thus spekende :

‘My worthy love and lord also,
It is and hath ben ever so,
That where a woman is alone
It maketh a man in his persone
The moré hardy for to wowe,
In hopé that she woldé bowe
To such thinge as his willé were,
While that her lord wer cellés where.
And of my self I tellé this,
For it so longé passéd is
Sith first that ye fro homé wente,
That well nigh every man is wente
To there I am while ye be oute,
Hath made and eche of hem aboute
Which lové can my lové seche
With great praiére and me be-
seche.

And somé maken great manáce,
That if they mighten come in place,
Where that they mighten her¹ will
have,

There is no thing me shuldé save,
That they ne woldé werché thinges.
And somé tellen me tidings,
That ye ben dede, and somé sain,
That certainly ye ben besain²

¹ Her, their.² Besain, resolved.

To love a newe and levé me.
But how as ever that it be,
I thonke unto the goddés alle
As yet for ought that is befallé,
May no man do my chekés rede.
But nethéles it is to drede,
That Lachesse in continuance
Fortuné mighté suche a chaunce,
Which no man after sholde amende.’

“Lo, thus this lady compleignénde
A letter unto her lord hath write
And praid him, that he woldé wite
And thenke how that she was al his,
And that he tarié nought in this,
But that hē wold his love acquite
To her ayeinward, and nought write
But come him self in allé haste,
That he none other paper waste,
So that he kepe and holde his
trouthe

Withouté let of any Slouthe.

“Unto her lord and lové liege
To Troié, where the greté siege
Was laid, this letter was conveyed.
And he, which wisdomé hath pur-
veied

Of all that to resón belongeth,
With gentil herte it underfongeth.
And whan he hath it overrad,
In parte he was right inly glad
And eke in parte he was disesed.¹
But love his hert hath so through
sesed

With pure ymaginación,
That for none ocupación
Whiche he can take on other side
He may nought flit his herte aside
Fro that his wife him had enformed,
Wherof he hath him self conformed
With all the will of his coragé
To shape and také the viáge
Homeward, what timé that he may.
So that him thinketh of a day
A thousand yere till he may se

¹ Disesed, made uneasy.

The visage of Penelope,
Whiche he desireth most of alle.
And whan the time is so befallē
That Troié was distruied and brent,
He madé non delaiément,
But goth him home in alle hie,¹
Where that he found to-fore his eye
His worthy wife in good estate,
And thus was cesséd the debate
Of Love, and Slouthé was excused,
Which doth great harm wher it is
used,

And hindreth many a cause honést.

“For of the greté clerk Grostest
I rede how busy that he was
Upon the clergie an heved² of bras
To forge and make it for to telle
Of suché thingés as befelle.
And seven yerés besinesse
He laidé, but for the Lachesse
Of half a minute of an houre
Fro firsté he began laboure
He lost all that he haddé do.
And other while it fareth so
In Lovés causé, who is slowe.
That he without under the wowe³
By nighté stant full oft a colde,
Which mighte, if that he haddé
wolde

His timé kept, have be withinne.

But Slouthé may nought profit
winne,

But he may singe in his caróle,
How latewar camé to the dole,⁴
Where he no good receivé might.
And that was provéd well by night
Whilome of the maidens five,
Whan thilké lord came for to wive,
For that her⁵ oilé was away
To light her lampés in his wey,
Her Slouthé brought it so aboute
Fro him that they be shet withoute.

¹ *Hie*, haste.

² *Heved*, head

³ *Wowe*, wall.

⁴ Late-aware came to the shaming

⁵ *Her*, their.

“Wherof, my soné, be thou ware,
Als ferforth as I tellé dare.
For Lové musté ben awaited,
And if thou be nought well affaited¹
In Lové to escheué Slouthé,
My soné, for to tellé trouthe
Thou might nought of thy self ben
able

To winné love or make it stable,
All though thou mightest love
acheve.”—

“My fader, that I may well leve.
But me was never assignéd place
Where yet to geten any grace,
Neme was non such time appointed,
For than I wolde I were unjointed
Of every limmé that I have
And I ne shuldé kepe and save
Min houré bothe and eke my stede,
If my lady it haddé bede.
But she is otherwise avised
Than graunté suche a time assised.
And nethéless of my Lachesse
There hath be no default I gesse
Of timé loste, if that I mighte.
But yet her liketh nought alighte
Upon no luré which I caste.
For ay the more I crié faste
The lasse her liketh for to here.
So for to speke of this matere
I seché that I mav nought finde,
I haste and ever I am behinde
And wot nought what it may
amounte.

But fader, upon min accompte,
Whiche ye ben set to examiné
Of shrifte after the discipline,
Say what your besté counseile is.”—

“My soné, my conseil is this.
How so it stonde of timé go,
Do forth thy besinessé so,
That no Lachesse in thee be founde,
For Slouthé is mighty to con-
founde

¹ *Affaited*, adapted to the purpose.

The spede of every mannés werke.
For many a Vice, as saith the clerke,
There hongen upon Slouthés lappe
Of suche as make a man mishappe
To piegne and tell of had-I-wist.¹
And therupon if that thee list
To knowe of Slouthes causé more
In speciál yet overmore
There is a Vicé fuil grevable
To him which is therof coulpable,
And stant of allé Vertue bare
Here after as I shall declare.

“**Touchend of slouth** in his
degré,

There is yet Pusillamité,
Which is to say in this langage
He that hath litel of coráge
And dare no mannés werk beginne;
So may he nought by reson winne.
For who that nought dare undertake
By right he shall no profit take.
But of this Vicé the natúre
Dare nothing set in aventure,
Him lacketh bothé worde and dede,
Wherof he shuld his causé spede.
He woll no manhode understonde,
For ever he hath drede upon honde
All is perill that he shall say,
Him thenketh the wolfeis in the way.
And of ymaginación
He maketh his excusación
And feigneth cause of puré drede
And ever he faileth atté nede
Till all be spilt that he with deleth.
He hath the sore which no man
heleth,
The whiche is clepéd lacke of herte;
Though every grace about him
sterce,
He woll nought onés sterc his fote,
So that by reson lese he mote
That woll nought aunter for to
winne.

¹ Had-I-wist, if I had only known. See note 1, page 75

“And so forth, sone, if we be-
ginne

To speake of Love and his servíce,
There ben truantes in suche a wise,
That lacken herté whan best were
They speken of Love, and right for
fere

They waxen dumber and dare nought
telle,

Withouten soun as dotyn the belle
Whiche hath no clappear for to
chime.

And right so they as for the tyme
Ben hertelés withouté speche
Of Love and dare nothing beseeche:
And thus they lese and winnité
nought.

Forthy, my sone, if thou art ought
Coulpable as touchend of this
Slouthé,

Shrive thee therof and tell me
trouthé.” —

“My fader, I am all beknowe
That I have ben one of the slowe
As for to telle in Lovés cas.
Min herte is yet and ever was
As though the world shuld al to-
breke,

So ferful that I dare nought spe-
ke
Of what purpós that I have noidne
Whan I toward my lady come,
But let it passe and overgo.”

“My sone, do no more so.
For after that a man pursueth,
To Lové so Fortúné sueth

Ful oft and yiveth her leppy
chaunce

To him which maketh continu-
aunce

To preié love and to beseeche,
As by ensample I shall the teche.

“**I finde**, how whulom there was
one,

Whose namé was Pigmalcóan,
Which was a lusty man of youthe.

The werkés of entaile¹ he couthe
 Above all other men as tho.
 And through Fortúne it felle him so
 As he, whom Lové shall travaile,
 He made an ymage of entaile
 Lich to a woman in semblaunce
 Of feture and of contenaunce,
 So faire yet never was figure.
 Right as a livés creatúre
 She semeth, for of yvor white
 He hath it wrought of such delite,
 That she was rody on the cheke
 And rede on both her lippés eke.
 Wherof that he him self beguileth,
 For with a goodly loke² she smileth:
 So that through pure impression
 Of his ymagination
 With all the herte of his coráge
 His love upon this faire ymage
 He set, and her of lové preide.
 But she no worde ayeinward said
 The longé day what thing he dede
 This ymage in the samé stede²
 Was ever by, that atté mete
 He wold her serve and praide her etc
 And put unto her mouth the cup.
 And whan the bord was taken up,
 He did as he wold her embrace.
 And ever among he aveth grace,
 As though she wisté what it mente.
 And thus him self he gan tormenté
 With such disese of lovés peine,
 That no man might him moré peine.
 But how it were of his penaunce
 He madé such continuaunce
 Fro day to night and praid so longé,
 That his praicé is underfonge,
 Which Venus of her gracé herde
 By night, and whan that he worst
 ferde
 And it lay in his naked arme,
 The cold ymage he feeleth warme
 Of flesshe and bone and full of life.

Lo, thus he wanne a lusty wife,

¹ *Entaile*, carving, sculpture. ² *Stede*, place.

Whiche obeisaúnt was at his will.
 And if he wolde have hold him still
 And nothing spoke, he shuld have
 failed.

“By this ensample thou might
 finde,

That word may worche above
 kinde.

Forthy, my sone, if that thou spare
 To speké, lost is all thy fare,
 For Slouthé bringeth in allé wo.

“And over this to loke also,
 It semeth Love is welwillénde
 To hem that ben continuénde
 With besy herté to pursue
 Thing which that is to Lové due.
 Wherof, my sone, in this matere
 Thou might ensample taken here,
 That with thy greté besinesse
 Thou might atteigné the richesse
 Of Lové, that there beno Slouth.”—

“But fader, so as it is right
 In forme of shrifté to beknowe
 What thing belongeth to the
 slowe,

Your faderhode I woldé pray,
 If there be further any way
 Touchend unto this ilké Vice.”—

My sone, pe, of this office
 There serveth one in speciál,
 Which lost hath his memorial,
 So that he can no wit withholdé
 In thing which he to kepe is holde,
 Wherof full offe him self he gre-
 veth.

And who that most upon him leveth,
 Whan that his wittés ben so weived,
 He may full lightly be deceived.

To serve Accidie in his office,
 There is of Slouth an other Vice,
 Which cleped is Foryetelnes-e,
 That nought may in his herte in-
 presse

Of vertue, which resón hath set,
 So clene his wittés he foryete.

For in the tellinge of his tale
 No more his herté than his male¹
 Hath remembraunce of thilké forme
 Wherof he sholde his wit enforme
 As than, and yet ne wot he why.
 Thus is his purpos nought forthý
 Forlore, of that he woldé bidde,
 And scarsely if he saith the thriddle²
 To love of that he haddé ment.
 Thus many a lover hath be shent.
 Telle on therefore, hast thou ben
 one
 Of hem that Slouth hath so be-
 gonne?"—

"Ye fader, ofte it hath ben so,
 That whan I am my lady fro
 And thenké me toward her drawe,
 Than cast I many a newé lawe
 And all the world torne up so down
 And so recorde I my lessoun
 And write in my memoriall
 What I unto her tellé shall,
 Right all the mater of my tale.
 But all nis worth a nuttëshale.
 For whan I comé there she is,
 I have it all foryete iwis
 Of that I thoughté for to telle;
 I can nought than unnethés spelle
 That I wende altherbest have rad,
 So sore I am of her adrad.
 For as a man that sodeinly
 A gost beholdeth so fare I,
 So that for fere I can nought gete
 My wit, but I my self foryete,
 That I wot never what I am,
 Ne whider I shall, ne whenne I
 cam,

But muse as he that were amased.
 Lich to the boke in whiche is rased
 The letter and may nothing be rad
 So ben my wittés overlad,
 That what as ever I thought have
 spoken,

It is out of min herté stoken,

¹ Male, bag.

² Thriddle, third

And stonde as who saith doumbe
 and defe,

That all nis worth an yvy lefe.
 Of that I wendé well have saide.
 And atté last I make abraide,¹
 Cast up min heed and loke aboute
 Right as a man that were in doubté
 And wot not where he shall become.
 Thus am I oft all overcome
 There as I wendé best to stonde.
 But after, whan I understonde
 And am in other place alone,
 I make many a wofull none
 Unto my self and speke so :

'Ha fool, where was thine herté
 tho

Whan thou thy worthy lady sigh,
 Were thou aferéd of her eye?
 For of her hond there is no drede,
 So well I knowe her womanhedé;
 That in her is no more outrage
 Than in a childe of thre yere age.
 Why hast thou drede of so good one,
 Whom allé vertue hath begone,²
 That in her is no violence
 But goodlyhede and innocence
 Withouten spot of any blame.
 Ha, nicé herté, fy for shame,
 A cowarde herte of love unlered,
 Wherof art thou so sore afered,
 That thou thy tungé suffrest frese
 And wolt thy godé wordés lese,
 Whan thou hast foundé time and
 space :

How sholdest thou deservé grace,
 Whan thou thy self darst axé none,
 But all thou hast foryete anone?
 And thus dispute in Lovés lore,
 But helpene finde I nought themore,
 But stomble upon min owné treine
 And make an eking³ of my peine.

¹ Make abraide, start suddenly, as from sleep.

² Begone, gone round about, wholly occupied, as in 'woe begone.'

³ Eking, increasing.

For ever whan I thenke amonge,
 Howe all is on my self alonge
 I say: 'O fool of allé fooles
 Thoufarest as he betwenetwo stoles
 That woldé sit and goth to grounde.
 It was ne never shall be founde
 Betwene Foryetelnesse and Drede,
 That man shulde any causé spede.'
 And thus, min holy father dere,
 Toward my self, as ye may here,
 I pleigne of my foryetelnesse.
 But ellés all the businesse,
 That may betake of mannés thought,
 My herté taketh and is through
 sought

To thenken ever upon that swete
 Withouté Slouthé I you behete.
 For what so falle or wel or wo,
 That thought foryete I nevermo,
 Where so I laugh or so I loure
 Nought half a minute of an houre
 Ne might I lette out of my minde
 But if I thought upon that ende:
 Therof me shall no Slouthé lette,
 Till Deth out of this world me fette,
 All though I had on suche a ring,
 As Moises through his enchaunting
 Sometime in Ethiopé made,
 Whan that he Tharbis wedded had,
 Which ringé bare of oblivión
 The name, and that was by resón,
 That were it on a finger sate,
 Anone his Love he so foryate,
 As though he had it never knowe.
 And so it fell that ilké throwe,
 Whan Tharbis had it on her honde,
 No knouleching of him she sonde,
 But all was clene out of memoire,
 As men may reden in histoire.
 And thus he wenté quite away,
 That never after that ilké day
 She thought, that there was such a
 one;

All was foryete and overgone.
 But in good feith so may nought I

For she is ever fasté by
 So nigh, that she min herté toucheth
 That for no thing that Slouthé
 voucheth

I may foryete her, lefe ne loth.
 For over all where as she goth,
 Min herté folweth her aboute.
 Thus may I say withouten doubte,
 For bet, for wers, for ought, for
 nought

She passeth never fro my thought.
 But whan I am there as she is,
 Min hert, as I you said er this,
 Sometime of her is sore adrad
 And sometime it is overglad
 All out of reule and out of space.
 For whan I se her goodly face
 And thenke upon her highé pris,
 As though I were in paradis,
 I am so ravished of the sight,
 That speke unto her I ne might
 As for the timé, though I wolde.
 For I ne may my witte unfoldé
 To finde o worde of that I mene,
 But all it is foryeté clene.

And though I stonde there a mile,
 All is foryeté for the while;
 A tunge I have and wordés none.
 And thus I stonde and thenke alone
 Of thing that helpeth ofte nought.
 But what I had aforé thought
 'To speké, whan I comé there,
 It is foryete, as nought ne were.
 And stoné amaséd and assotéd,
 That of no thing which I have notéd
 I can nought than a noté singe,
 But all is out of knouleching.
 Thus what for joy and what for diede
 All is foryeten atté nede,
 So that, my fader, of this Slouthé
 I have you said the pleiné trowthé,
 Ye may it, as ye list, rediesse.
 For thus stant my foryetelnesse
 And eke my pusillamité.
 Say now forth what ye list to me,

For I wol only do by you."—

"My sone, I have wel herd, how thou

Hast said, and that thou must amende.

For Love his gracé wol nought sende
To that man which dare axé none.
For this we knowen everychone,
A mannés thought withouté speche
God wot, and yet that man beseche
His will is.¹ For withouté bedes
He doth his grace in fewé stedes.
And what man that foryete himselfe,
Among a thousand benought twelve
That wol him take in remembraunce,
But let him falle and take his
chaunce.

Forthy pull up a besy herte,
My sone, and let no thing asterte
Of Lové fro thy besinesse.
For touching of foryetelnesse,
Which many a love hath set behinde,
A tale of great ensample I finde,
Wherof it is pité to wite
In the manér as it is write.

Sing Demephon whan he by
ship

To Troié ward with felaship
Sailend goth upon his wey,
It hapneth him at Rodepey,
As Eolus him haddé blowe
To londe and rested for a throwe.
And fell that ilké timé thus,
That the doughter of Lígurgús,
Which quené was of the contré,
Was sojournéd in that citee
Within a castel nigh the stronde,
Where Demephon cam up to londe.
Phillis she hight and of yong age
And of stature and of viságe
She had all that her best besemeth.
Of Demephon right wel her que-
meth,²

¹ Although God knows our thoughts, yet his will is that we utter them in prayer.

² Her *quemeth*, is agreeable to her.

Whan he was come and made him
chere.

And he, that was of his manere
A lusty knight, ne might asterte
That he ne set on her his herte,
So that within a day or two
He thought, how ever that it go,
He wolde assaié the fortune;
And gan his herté to comune
With goodly wordés in her ere,
And for to put her out of fere
He swore and hath his trouthe
plight

To be for ever her owné knight.
And thus with her he stille abode
There, while his ship on anker rode,
And had inough of time and space
To speke of love and seché grace.
This lady herd all that he saide,
And how he swore and how he
praide,

Which was as an enchauntément
To here, that was as innocent.
As though it weré trouthe and feith
She leveth all that ever he saith,
And as her in fortuné sholde
She graunteth him all that he wolde.
Thus was he for the time in joie,
Til that he shuldé go to Troie,
But tho she madé mochel sorwe
And he his trouthe laid to borwe¹
To come and if that he live may
Ayein within a monthé day.
And therupon they kisten bothe,
But were hem leef or were hem lothe
To ship he goth, and forth he went
To Troy, as was his first entent.
The daiés go, the monthé passeth,
Her love encreseth and his lasseth;
For him she lefté slepe and mete,
And he his time hath all foryete,
So that this wofull yongé quene,
Which wot nought what it mighté
mene,

¹ To borwe, in pledge.

A letter send and praid him come
And saith how she is overcome
With strengthe of love in suche a
wise,

That she nought longé may suffice
To liven out of his presénce,
And put upon his consciénce
The trouthe whiche he hath behote,
Wherof she loveth him so hote,
She saith, that if he lenger lette
Of such a day as she him sette,
She shuldé sterven in his Slouthe,
Which were a shame unto his
trouthe.

This letter is forth upón her sonde,
Wherof somdele comfort on honde
She toke, as she that wolde abide
And waite upon that ilké tide
Which she hath in her letter write.
But now is pité for to wite,
As he did erst, so he foyate
His time eftsone and over-sate.
But she, which mighté nought do so,
The tide awaíteth evermo
And cast her eye upon the see,
Sontimé nay, somtimé ye,
Somtime he cam, somtimé nought,
Thus she disputeth in her thought
And wot nought what she thenké
may.

But fastend all the longé day
She was into the derké night;
And tho she hath do set up light
In a lantérne on high alofte
Upon a toure, where she goth ofte
In hopé that in his commíng
He shuldé se the light brenninge,
Wherof he might his weies right
To comé where she was by night.
But all for nought, she was deceived,
For Venus hath her hopé weived
And shewed her upon the sky
How that the day was fasté by,
So that within a litel throwe
The daies light she mighté knowe ;

Tho she beheld the see at large :
And whan she sigh there was no
barge

Ne ship, als fer as she may kenne,
Down fro the tour she gan to renne
Into an herber all her owne,
Where many a wonder wofull mone
She madé, that no life it wist,
As she which all her joíe mist,
That now she swouneth, now she
pleigneth,

And all her facé she disteigneth
With terés, whiche as of a welle
The stremés from her eyen felle.
So as she might, and ever in one,
She clepéd upon Demeophon .
And said : ' Alas, thou slowé wight,
Where was there ever suche a
knight,

That so through his ungentillesse
Of Slouthe and of Foryetelnesse
Ayein his trouthe brak his steven.'¹
And tho her eye up to the heven
She cast and saide : ' O thou un-
kinde,

Here shalt thou through thy Slouthe
finde,

If that the list to come and se,
A lady dede for love of the,
So as I shall my selve spille,
Whome, if it haddé be thy wille,
Thou mightest savé well inough.
With that upon a grené bough
Accinte of silke, which she there had,
She knette, and so her self she lad
That she about her white swere²
It did, and henge her selven there.
Wherof the goddés were amoved,
And Demeophon was so reproved,
That of the goddés providence
Was shapé suche an evidence
Ever afterward ayein the slowe,
That Phillis in the sumé throwe³

¹ Steven, voice.

² Sware, neck.

³ Throwe, space of time.

Was shape into a nutté-tre,
That allé men it mighté se,
And after P'hillis philliberd¹
This tre was clepéd in the yerd,
And yet for Demephon to shame
Into this day it bereth the name.
This wofull chaunce how that it ferde
Anone as Demephon it herde
And every man it hadde in speche,
His sorwe was nought tho to seche,
He gan his Slouthé for to banne,²
But it was all to late thanne.

"Lo, thus, my soné, might thou
wite

Ayein this Vice how it is write,
For no man may the harmés gesse,
That fallen through Foryetelnesse,
Wherof that I thy shrift have herd.
But yet of Slouthé how it hath ferd
In other wise I thenke oppose,
If thou have gilt, as I suppose.

Fulfilled of Slouthes exempla
There is yet one his secretaire,
And he is clepéd Negligence,
Which woll nought loke his evi-
dence,

Wherof he may beware to-fore.
But whan he hath his causé lore
Than is he wise after the honde,
Whan helpé may no maner bonde
Than atté firsté wold he binde.
Thus evermore he stant behinde,
Whan he the thing may nought
amende,

Than is he ware, and saith at ende :
'Ha, wolde god I hadde knowe,'
Wherof bejapéd with a mowe.³
He goth, for whan the greté stede
Is stolé than he taketh hede
And maketh the stable-doré fast.
Thus ever he pleith an after cast
Of all that he shall say or do.

He hath a maner eke also,
Him list nought lerné to be wise,
For he sette of no vertu prise
But as him liketh for the while,
So feleth he ful ofté guile
Whan that he wench siker to
stonde.

And thus thou might wel under-
stonde,

My sone, if thou art suche in love
Thou might nought come at thin
above

Of that thou woldest wel acheve." —

"Min holy fader, as I leve,
I may wel with sauf consciéce
Excusé me of Negligence
Towardés Love in allé wise.
For though I be none of the wise,
I am so truly amoroús,
That I am ever curioús
Of hem that conné best enforme
To knowe and witen all the forme,
What failleth unto Lové's craft.
But yet ne fond I nought the haft
Which might unto the blade accorde.
For never herd I men recorde
What thinge it is that might availe
To winné love withouté faile.
Yet so fer couthe I never finde
Man that by reson ne by kinde
Me couthé teché suche an arte,
That he ne failéd of a parte.
And as toward min owné wit
Contrive I couthé never yit
To finden any sikernesse,
That me might other more or lesse
Of Lové maké for to spede.
For leveth wel withouten drede,
If that there weré suche a wey
As certainly as I shall deie
I hadde it lernéd longe ago ;
But I wot wel there is none so.
And nethéles it may wel be
I am so rude in my degré
And eke my wittés ben so dull,

¹ *Philliberd*, filbert.

² *Banne*, put under interdict.

³ *Mowe*, mouth, grimace.

That I ne may nought to the full
 Atteigne unto so highe a lore.
 But this I dar say overmore,
 All though my Wit ne be nought
 stronge,

It is nought on my Will alonge;
 For that is besy night and day
 To lerne all that he lerné may,
 How that I mighté Lové winne.
 But yet I am as to beginne
 Of that I woldé make an ende,
 And for I not¹ how it shall wende,
 That is to me my mosté sorwe.
 But I dare také God to borwe,
 As after min entendenient
 None other wisé negligent
 Than I you say have I nought be.
 Forthý pur sainté charité
 Tell me, my fader, what you
 • semeth.”—

“In good feith, soné, wel me
 quemeth,
 That thou thy self hast thus acquit
 Toward this Vice in which no wit
 Abidé may, for in an houre
 He lest² all that he may laboure
 The longé yere, so that men sain
 What ever he doth it is in vein.
 For through the Slouth of Negli-
 gence

There was yet never such sciéce
 Ne vertue which was bodely,
 That nis destrued and lost therby.
 Ensample that it hath be so,
 In boke I findé write also.

Phebus, which is the sonnéc hote,
 That shineth upon erthé hote
 And causeth every livés helth,
 He hadde a sone in all his welth,
 Which Pheton hight, and he de-
 sireth

And with his moder he conspireth,
 The which was clepéd Clemenc.
 For helpe and counseil, so that he

His faders carté¹ ledé might
 Upon the fairé daiés light.
 And for this thing they bothé praide
 Unto the fader, and he saide,
 He wolde wel, but forth with all
 Thre points he had in speciall
 Unto his sone in allé wise,
 That he him shuldé wel avise
 And take it as by wey of lore.
 First was, that he his hors to sore
 Ne prike; and over that he tolde,
 That he the reines fasté holde;
 And also that he be right ware
 In what manér he lode his chare,
 That he mistaké nought his gate,
 But upon avisement algate
 He shuldé bere a siker eye,
 That he to lowé ne to high
 His carté drive at any throwe,
 Whereof that he might overthrowe.
 And thus by Phebus ordenaunce
 Toke Pheton into governaunce
 The sonnéc carté, which he ladde.
 But he such veiné glorie hadde
 Of that he was set upon high,
 That he his own estate ne sigh
 Through negligence, and toke none
 hede.

So might he welnought longé spede.
 For he the hors withouten lawe
 The carté let abouté drawe
 Where as hem liketh wantonly,
 That atté lasté sodeinly,
 For he no reson woldé knowe,
 This fry cart he drove to lowe
 And fireth all the worlde aboute;
 Whereof they weren all in doubte,
 And to the god for helpé criden
 Of suche unhappés as betiden.
 Phebus, which sigh the negligéce,
 How Pheton ayein his defence²
 His chare hath drive out of the wey
 Ordeigneth that he fel away

¹ *Carte*, chariot.

² *Defence*, for bidding.

¹ *Not*, know not.

² *Let*, lost.

Out of the cart into the flood
 And dreinté. Lo now, how it stood
 With him, that was so negligent,
 That fro the highé firmament,
 For that he woldé go to lowe,
 He was anone down overthrowe.
 In high estate it is a Vice
 To go to lowe, and in service
 It greveth for to go to high,
 Wherof a tale in poesie

I finde, how whilom Dedalus
 Whiche hadde a sone and Icharus
 He hight, and though hem thoughté
 lothe

In such prisón they weren bothe
 With Minotaurus, that aboute
 They mighten no where wenden
 oute.

So they begonné for to shape
 How they the prison might escape.
 This Dedalus, which fro his youthe
 Was taught and many craftés couthe,
 Of fethers and of other thinges
 Hath made to flee diversé winges
 For him and for his sone also ;
 To whome he yaf in chargé tho
 And bad him thenké therupon,
 How that his wingés ben set on
 With wax, and if he toke his flight
 To high, all sodeinlich he might
 Make it to melté with the sonne.
 And thus they have her flight be-
 gonne

Out of the prison faire and softe
 And whan they weren both alofte,
 This Icharus began to mounte
 And of the counseil none acompte
 He setté whiche his fader taught,
 Til that the sonne his wingés caught,
 Wherof it malt, and fro the hight
 Withouten helpe of any flight
 He fell to his destruction.
 And lich to that condition
 There fallen ofte times fele
 For lacke of governaunce in welc

Als wel in love as other wey.”—

“Now godé fader, I you prey,
 If there be more in this matere
 Of Slouthé, that I might it here.”—

“My sone, as for thy diligence,
 Whiche every mannés consciéce
 By reson shuldé reule and kepe,
 If that thee list to také kepe,
 I wol thee tell aboven alle,
 In whom no vertu may befallé,
 Whiche yiveth unto the Vices rest
 And is of Slouthé the slowest.

Among these other of Slouthés
 kinde,

Whiche allé labour set behinde,
 And hateth allé besinesse,
 There is yet one, whiche Idelnesse
 Is clepéd, and is the norice
 In mannés kinde of every Vice,
 Which secheth esés many folde.
 In winter doth he nought for colde ;
 In somer may he nought for hete ;
 So wether that he frese or swete,
 Or be he in, or be he oute,
 He woll ben idel all aboute,
 But if he pleié ought at dees.
 For who as ever také fees
 And thenketh worship to deserve,
 There is no lord whome he woll serve
 As for to dwelle in his service,
 But if it were in suche a wise,
 Of that he seeth par aventure,
 That by lordship and coverture
 He may the more stonde stille
 And use his Idelnesse at wille.
 For he ne woll no travail take
 To ridé for his ladies sake,
 But liveth all upon his wissches,
 And as a cat wold eté fisshes
 Withoute wetting of his cles,
 So wolde he do, but nethéles
 He faileth ofte of that he wolde.

“My sone, if thou of suche a molde
 Art made, now tell me plein thy
 shrift.”—

"Nay fader, god I yive a yift,
That toward Love, as by my wit
All idel was I never yit,
Ne never shall, while I may go."—

"Now, soné, tellé me than so,
What hast thou done of besiship
To Love and to the ladyship
Of heré which thy lady is?"—

"My fader, ever yet er this
In every place, in every stede,
What so my lady hath me bede,
With all min herte obedient
I have therto be diligent.
And if so is that she bid nought,
What thing that than into my
thought

Cometh first, of that I may suffise,
I bowe and profre my service.
Somtime in chambre, somtime in
halle,

Right so as I se the timés falle,
And whan she goth to heré masse
That timé shall nought overpasse,
That I napproche her ladyhede
In aunter if I may her lede
Unto the chapel and ayein,
Than is nought all my wey in vein.
Somdele I may the better fare,
Whan I, that may nought fele her
bare,

May lede her clothéd in min arme.
But afterwarde it doth me harme
Of pure ymaginacioun,
For thanne this collatioun
I make unto my selven ofte
And say: 'Ha lord, how she is softe,
How she is round, how she is small,
Now woldé God, I hadde her all
Withouté daunger at my wille!'
'And than I sike and sitt stille,
Of that I se my besy thought
Is tornéd idel into nought.
But for all that let I ne may,
Whan I se time another day,
That I ne do my besinesse

Unto my ladies worthinesse.
For I therto my wit affaite¹

To se the timés and awaite
What is to done, and what to leve.
And so whan time is, by her leve
What thing she bit me don, I do,
And where she bit me gon, I go,
And whan her list to clepe, I come.
Thus hath she fulliche overcome
Min Idelnessé til I sterve,
So that I mot her nedés serve.
For as men sain, nede hath no lawe,
Thus mote I nedely to her drawe;
I serve, I bowe, I loke, I loute,
Min eyé folweth her aboute.
What so she wollé so woll I,
Whan she woll sit, I knelé by,
And whan she stont, than woll I
stonde,

And whan she taketh her werk on
honde
Of weving or of embrouderie,
Than can I nought but muse and
prie

Upon her fingers longe and smale,
And nowé I thenke, and nowé I tale,
And nowé I singe, and nowé I sike,
And thus my contenance I pike.²
And if it falle, as for a timé
Her liketh nought abidé by me
But busien her on other thinges,
Than make I other tarienges
To drecché forth the longé day,
For me is loth departe away.
And than I am so simple of port,
That for to feigné some desporte
I pleié with her litel hound
Nowe on the bed, nowe on the
ground,

Now with the briddés in the cage,
For there is none so litel page
Ne yet so simple a chamberere,
That I ne make hem allé chere,

¹ *Affaite*, bring to fitness.

² *Pike*, make peep.

All for they shuldé speké wele.
 Thus mow ye se my besy whele,
 That goth nought ideliche aboute.
 And if her list to riden oute
 On pelrinage or other stede,
 I comé, though I be nought bede,
 And take her in min arme alofte
 And set her in her sadel softe
 And so forth lede her by the bridel,
 For that I woldé nought ben idel.
 And if her list to ride in chare,
 And than I may therof beware,
 Anoné I shapé me to ride
 Right even by the charés side.
 And as I may, I speke amonge,
 And other while I singe a songe,
 Whiche Ovide in his bokés made,
 And said : ' O whiché sorwés glad,
 O which wofull prosperité
 Belongeth to the propreté
 Of Lové? Who so wold him serve,
 And yet therefromaynoman swerve,
 That he ne mot his lawe obey.'
 And thus I ridé forth my wey
 And am right besy overall
 With herte, and with my body all,
 As I have saide you here to-fore.
 My godé fader tell therfore
 Of Idelnesse if I have gilt."—

"My soné, but thou tellé wilt
 Ought elles than I may now here,
 Thou shalt have no penauncé here.
 And nethéles a man may se,
 How now a daiés that there be
 Full many of such hertés slowe,
 That woll nought besien hem to
 knowe
 What thing Love is, til atté last,
 That he with strengthe hem over-
 cast

That malgré hem they mot obey
 And done all idelship away
 To servé wel and besiliche.
 But, soné, thou art none of sich,
 For Lové shall thee wel excuse.

But otherwise if thou refuse
 To lové thou might so par cas
 Ben idel, as somtimé was
 A kingés doughter unaviséd,
 Til that Cupide her hath chastised,
 Wherof thou shalt a talé here
 Accordant unto this matere.

Of **Armenie** I redé thus,
 There was a king whiche Herupus
 Was hote, and he a lusty maide
 To doughter had, and as men saide
 Her namé was Rosiphelé,
 Which tho was of great renomé.
 For she was bothé wise and faire
 And shuldé ben her faders heire.
 But she had o defaulte of Slouthé
 Towardés Love, and that was routhé.
 For so well couthe no man say
 Which mighté set her in the way
 Of Lovés ocupación
 Through none ymaginación ;
 That scolé woldé she nought knowe.
 And thus she was one of the slowe
 As of suche hertés besinesse,
 Till whanné Venus tñe goddessé,
 Which Lovés Court hath for to
 reule,
 Hath brought her into better reule
 Forth with Cupide, and with his
 might,

For they merveile of suche a wight,
 Which tho was in her lusty age
 Desireth not of mariáge.
 For he, that highé hertés loweth,
 With fry dartés whiche hethroweth,
 Cupidé, whiche of Love is god,
 In chastisinge hath made a rod
 To drive away her wantonnesse,
 So that within a while I gesse
 She had on suche a chauncé sporned¹
 That all her mod was overtorned,
 Which first she had, of slowe
 manere.

For thus it felle, as thou shalt here.

¹ *Sporned*, stumbled against.

Whan comé was the month of
 May,
 She woldé walke upon a day,
 And that was er the sonne arist,
 Of women but a fewé it wist.
 And forth she wenté prively
 Unto the park was fasté by,
 All softé walkend on the gras,
 Till she came there the laundé¹ was,
 Through which ther ran a great
 rivere.
 It thought her faire and saidé :
 ' Here

I woll abide under the shawe,'
 And bad her women to withdrawe
 And there she stood aloné stille
 To thenké what was in her wille.
 She sigh the swoté flourés springe,
 She herdé gladdé fowlés singe,
 She sigh the bestés in her kinde,
 The buck, the doo, the hert, the
 hinde,

The malé go with the femele.
 And so began there a quarele
 Betwené Love and her owne herte,
 Frowhich she couthe nought asterte.
 And as she cast her eye aboute,
 She sigh clad in one sute a route
 Of ladies, where they comen ride
 A longe under the wodés side.
 On faire amblendé hors they set,
 That were all whité, faire and great,
 And evérychoné ride on side.
 The sadels were of suche a pride
 With perle and gold so well begone,
 So riché sigh she never none.
 In kirtles and in copés riche
 They weren clothéd alle aliche,
 Departed even of white and blewé
 With allé lustés that she knewe
 They were embrouded over all.
 Her bodies weren longe and small,
 The beauté fair upon her² face
 It may none erthly thing deface,

¹ *Laundé*, lawn.

² *Her*, their.

Corounés on her hede they bere
 As eche of hem a quené were,
 That all the golde of Cresus halle
 The lesté coronall of alle
 Ne might have bought after the
 worth.

Thus comen they ridéndé forth,
 The kingés doughter, which this
 sigh,

For pure abasshé drewe her adrigh¹
 And helde her close under a bough
 And let hem passen stille inough.
 For as her thought in her avise,
 To hem that weren of suche a price
 She was nought worthy to axen there
 Fio whenne they come, or what
 they were ;

But lever than this worldés good
 She wolde have wist how that it
 stood

And put her hede a litel out,
 And as she lokéd her aboute,
 She sigh coménd under the linde
 A woman upon an hors behinde.
 The hors on which she rode was
 black,

All lene and galled upon the back
 And halted as he were encloied,²
 Whei of the woman was annoied.
 Thus was the hors in sory plight,
 But for all that a sterré whit
 Amiddés in her front she hadde.
 Her sadel eke was wonder badde,
 In which the wofull woman sat,
 And nethéles there was with that
 A riché bridel for the nones
 Of golde and preciouisé stones ;
 Her coté was somdele to-tore,
 About her middel twenty score
 Of horsé halters and well mo
 There hingen atté timé tho.
 Thus whan she came the lady nigh,
 Than toke she better hede and sigh

¹ *Adrigh*, aside.

² *Encloied*, hurt with a nail in shoeing.

The woman fair was of viságe,
 Fresh, lusty, yong and tendre of age.
 And so this lady, there she stood,
 Bethought her well and understood,
 That this, which came ridénde tho,
 Tidíngés couthé telle of tho
 Whiche as she sigh to-foré ride,
 And put her forth and praide abide
 And said : ' Ha suster, let me here,
 What ben they that ridén now here
 And ben so richély arraied ?'
 This woman, which came so es-
 maied,¹

Answerdé with full softé speche
 And said : ' Madame, I shall you
 teché,

These are of tho, that whilom were
 Servaúnts to love and trouthé bere
 There as they had their hertés sette.
 Fare well, for I may nought be lette.
 Madame, I go to my servíce,
 So must I haste in allé wise,
 Forthý madamé, yif me leve.
 I may nought longé with you leve.' ²

' Ha, gode suster, yet I prey,
 Tell me, why ye be so besey
 And with these halters thus begone ?'

' Madame, whilom I was one,
 That to my fader hadde a king.
 But I was slowe and for no thing
 Me listé nought to Love obey,
 And that I now full sore abey,"
 For ⁴ I whilom no lové hadde,
 My hors is now feble and badde
 Aud all to-tore is min array,
 And every yere this fressshé May
 These lusty ladies ride aboute,
 And I must nedés sue her route
 In this manér, as ye now se
 And trusse her halters forth with me
 And am but as her horsé knave.

None other office I ne have,
 Hem thenketh I am worthy no more,
 For I was slowe in Lovés lore
 Whan I was able for to lere
 And woldé nought the talés here
 Of hem that couthen Lové teché.'

' Now tell me than, I you beseche,
 Whe of that riché bridel serveth ?'
 With that her chere away she
 swerveth

And gan to wepe and thus she tolde :
 ' This bridel, which ye now beholde,
 So riche upon min horsé hed ;
 Madame, afore er I was dede,
 Whan I was in my lusty life,
 There fell into min hert a strife
 Of lové, which me overcome,
 So that thereafter hede I none
 And thought I woldé love a knight ;
 That lasté well a fourténight,
 For it no lenger mighté laste,
 So nigh my life was atté laste.
 But nowe alas to laté ware
 That I ne had him loved ere,
 For deth cam so in hasté by me,
 Er I therto had any timé,
 That it ne mighté ben achieved.
 But for all that I am releved
 Of that my will was good therto
 That Lové suffreth it be so
 That I shall such a bridel were.
 Nowe have ye herd all min answeré,
 To God, madame, I you Betake,¹
 And warneth alle for my sake,
 Of Lové that they be nought idel,
 And bid hem thenke upon my bridel.¹
 And with that worde all sodeinly
 She passeth as it were a skie²
 All clene out of this ladies sight.
 And tho for fere her herte aflight
 And saide to her self : ' Helas !
 I am right in the samé cas.
 But if I live after this day,
 I shall amende it if I may.'

¹ *Esmained*, troubled, but possibly a-Maying,
 for "esmaier" meant also in old French to

² *Lere*, remain.

³ *Abey*, pay for

⁴ *For*, because.

¹ *Betake*, entrust, commend. ² *Skie*, shadow.

And thus homwárd this lady went
And chaungéd all her first entent
Within her herte, and gan to swere
That she no halters woldé bere.

“Lo sone, here might thou taken
hede,

How Idelnesse is for to drede,
Nameliche of love, as I have write.
Fo thou might understonde and
wite,

Among the gentil nación
Love is an ocupación
Which for to kepe his lustés save
Shold every gentil herté have ;
For as the lady was chastised,
Right so the knight may ben avised
Which idel is and woll nought serve
To Love, he may par cas deserve
A greater peiné than she hadde,
Whan she abouté with her ladde
The horsé halters ; and forthý
Good is to be waré therby.
But for to loke aboven alle
These maidenés how so it falle,
They shulden take ensample of this,
Whiche I have tolde, for soth it is.
And thilké Love is well at ese,
Which set is upon mariáge,
For that dare shewen the visage
In allé places openly.

A great merveile it is forthý,
How that a maiden woldé lette
That she her timé ne besette
To haste unto that ilké feste,
Wherof the Lové is all honeste.
Men may recover loss of good,
But so wise man yet never stood
Which may recover time ilore.
So may a maiden well therefore
Ensample take, of that she straun-
geth

As thou hast understonde above.”—

“My fader, as toward the love
Of maidens for to tellé trouthe,
Ye have thilké Vice of Slouthe

Me thenketh right wonder wel de-
clared,

That ye the women have nought
spared

Of hem that tarien so behinde.
But yet it falleth in my minde
Toward the men, how that ye speke
Of hem that woll no travail seke
In cause of Love, upon deserte,
To speke in wordés so coverte
I not what travail that ye ment.”—

“My sone, and after min entent
I woll the tellé what I thought,
How whilom men her lovés bought
Through great travaile in straungé
londes,

Where that they wroughten with
her hondes

Of armés many a worthy dede
In sondry place, as men may rede.

“That every love of puré kinde
Is first forth drawé, well I finde.
But nethéless yet over this
Deserté doth so, that it is
The rather had in many place.
Forthý who secheth Lovés grace
Where that these worthy women
are,

Hemaynought than him selvés spare
Upon his travail for to serve
Wherof that he may thank de-
serve ;

Where as these men of armés be
Sometime over the Greté See,
So that by londe and eke by ship
He mot travailé for worship
And maké many hastif rodes,
Somtime in Pruse, sometime in
Rodes,

And some time into Tartarie,
So that these heralds on him crie :
‘Vailant, vailant, lo, where he
goth !’

And than he yiveth hem golde and
cloth,

So that his famé mighté springe
And to his ladies eré bringe
Some tiding of his worthinesse ;
So that she might of his prowessse
Of that she herdé men recorde
The better unto his love accorde
And daunger put out of her mood,
Whan allé men recorden good,
And that she wot well for her sake
That he no travail woll forsake.

" Mysone, of this travaile I mene ;
Now shrif the, for it shall be sene,
If thou art idel in this cas."—

" My fader ye, and ever was
For as me thenketh truély,
That every man doth more than I
As of this point, and if so is,
That I have ought so done er this,
It is so litel of accompt
As who saith it may nought amount
To winne of love his lusty yifte.
For this I tellé you in shrifte,
That me were lever her lové winne
Than Kaire and all that is therinne.
And for to sleen the hethen alle
I not¹ what good there mighté
falle,

So mochel blood though ther be
shad.

This finde I writen, how Crist bad
That no man other shuldé slee.
What shulde I winne over the see,
If I my lady lost at home ?
But passé they the salté fome
To whom Crist bad they shulden
preche

To all the world and his feith teche.
But now they rucken² in her nest
And resten as hem liketh best
In all the swetenesse of delices.
Thus they defenden³ us the Vices
And sit hem selven all amidde ;
To sleen and fighten they us bidde

Hem whom they shuld, as the boke
saith,

Converten unto Cristés feith.
But herof have I great merveille,
How they wol biddé me traveile.
A Sarazin if I slee shall,
I slee the soulé forth withall,
And that was never Cristes lore.
But now Ho¹ there, I say no more.
But I woll speke upon my shrifte
And to Cupide I pris a yifte,
That who as ever pris deserve
Of armés, I wol Lové serve,
As though I shuld hem bothé kepe,
Als well yet wolde I také kepe,
Whan it were timé to abide
And for to travaile and to ride,
For how as ever a man laboure,
Cupide appointed hath his hoüre.

" For I have herdé tell also, ,
Achilles left his armés so
Both of him self and of his men
At Troié for Polixenen
Upon her lové whan he felle,
That for no chauncé that befelle
Among the Grekes or up or down
He woldé nought ayein the town
Ben arméd, for the love of her.
And so me thenketh, levé sir,
A man of armés may him reste
Somtime in hopé for the beste,
If he may finde a werré ner ;
What shulde I thanné go so fer
In straungé londes many a mile
To ride, and lese² at home there
while

My love ? it were a short beyete²
To winné chaffe and lese whete.
But if my lady biddé woldé,
That I for her lové sholdé
Travail, me thenketh truély,
I mighté flee through out the sky
And go through out the depé see,

¹ Not, know not.

² Rucken, squat.

³ Defenden, forbid.

¹ Ho! was the cry for stopping in the chase.

² Beyete, gain.

For all ne'sette I at a stre,¹
 What thank that I might ellés gete.
 What helpeth a man havé mete,
 Where drinké lacketh on the borde,
 What helpeth any mannés worde
 To say howe I travailé faste,
 Where as me faileth atté laste
 That thing whiche I travailé fore.
 O, in good timé were he bore,
 That might atteigné suche a mede.
 But certés if I mighté spede
 With any maner besinesse
 Of worldés travail, than I gesse
 There shuldé me none idelship
 Departen from her ladyship.
 But this I se on daiés now,
 The blindé god, I wot nought how,
 Cupido, which of love is lorde,
 He set the thingés in discorde,
 That they that lest to love entende
 Full ofte he woll hem yive and sende
 Most of his grace, and thus I finde,
 That he that sholdé go behinde,
 Goth many a timé fer to-fore.
 Sowote I nought right well therfore,
 On whether bord that I shall saile.
 Thus can I nought myself counseile,
 But all I set on aventure
 And am, as who saith, out of cure
 For ought that I can say or do;
 For evermore I finde it so,
 The moré besinesse I lay,
 The moré that I knele and pray
 With godé wordés and with softe,
 The more I am refuséd ofte
 With besinesse and may nought
 winne,
 And in goodfeith that is great sinne.
 For I may say of dede and thought,
 That idel man have I be nought,
 For how as ever I be deslaied,
 Yet evermore I have assaied.
 But though my besinessé laste,
 All is but idel atté laste,

¹ *Sire*, straw.

For whan theffect is Idelnesse,
 I not what thing is besinesse.
 Say what avaieth all the dede,
 Which nothing helpeth atté nede?
 For the Fortúne of every fame
 Shall of his endé bere a name.
 And thus for ought is yet befallé,
 An idel man I woll me calle
 As after min entendément.
 But upon your amendément,
 Min holy fader, as you semeth
 My reson and my causé demeth."—
 "My sone, I have herde of thy
 matere,
 Of that thou hast thee shiiven
 here.
 And for to speke of idel fare
 Me semeth that thou tharst¹ nought
 care,
 But only that thou might nought
 spede.
 And therof, sone, I woll thee rede,
 Abide and hasté nought to faste,
 Thy dedes ben every day to caste,
 Thou nost,² what chauncé shall
 betide.
 Better is to waite upon the tide
 Than rowe ayein the stremés
 stronge.
 For though so be thee thenketh
 longe,
 Par cas the revolución
 Of heven and thy condición
 Ne be nought yet of one accorde.
 But I dare maké this recorde
 To Venus, whose prest that I am,
 That sithen that I hider cam
 To here, as she me bad, thy life,
 Wherof thou ellés be giltife,
 Thou might herof thy consciéce
 Excuse and of great diligence,
 Which thou to love hast so dis-
 pended,
 Thou oughtest wel to be comended.

¹ *Tharst*, needst. ² *Nost*, knowest not.

But if so be that there ought faile,
Of that thou slouthest to travaile
In armés, for to ben absént,¹
And for thou makest an argument
Of that thou saidest here above,
How Achillés through strength of
love

His armés lefté for a throwe,
Thou shalt an other talé knowe,
Whiche is contrarie, as thou shalt
wite.

For this a man may findé write,
Whan that knighthodé shall be
werred,

Lust may nought thanné be pre-
ferred,

The bed mot thanné be forsake
And shield and spere on hondé take,
Which thing shall make hem after
glad,

Whan they be worthy knightés
made,

Wherof, so as it cometh to honde,
A talé thou shalt understonde,
How that a knight shall armés sue,
And for the while his ese eschue.

"**Upon knighthode** I redé thus,
How whilom whan the king Nau-
plus,

The fader of Palamides.

Came for to preien Ulixes

With other Gregois eke also,

That he with hem to Troié go,

Where that the siegé shuldé be

Anone upon Penelope,

His wife, whom that he loveth hote,

Thenkend, woldé hem nought be-
lete.

But he shope than a wonder wile
How that he shulde hem best be-
guile,

So that he mighté dwellé stille
At home and weld his love at wille.
Wherof erly the morwe day
Out of his bed where that he lav

Whan he was up, he gan to fare
Into the felde and loke and stare
As he which feigneth to be wode,¹
He toke a plough wherethatit stood,
Wherin anone in stede of oxes
He let do yoken greté foxes,
And with great salt thelonde he sewe.
But Nauplus, which the causé knewe,
Ayein the sleighté which he feigneth
Another sleight anone ordeigneth.
And fell that time Ulixes hadde
A childe to sone, and Nauplus radde
How men that soné také sholde
And setten him upon the molde,
Where that his fader held the plough
In thilké furch which he thodrough.
For in such wise he thought assay
Howe it Ulixes shuldé pay,
If that he weré wode or none.
The knightés for this child forh
gone,

Telemachus anone was fette
To-fore the plough and even sette,
Where that his fader shuldé drive.
But whan he sigh his childe as blive²
He drof the plough out of the way,
And Nauplus tho began to say
And hath half in a japé cried:

O Ulixés, thou art aspiéd,
What is all this thou woldest mene?
For openlich it is now sene
That thou hast feigné all this thing,
Which is great shamé to a king
Whan that for lust of any slouth
Thou wolt in a quarél of trouthe
Of armés thilke honoúr forsake
And dwelle at home for lovés sake.
For better it were honoúr to winne
Than lové which líkinge is inne.
Forthý také worshíp on honde
And ellés thou shalt understonde
These other worthy kingés alle
Of Grecé, which unto thee calle,
Towardés thee wol be right wroth

1 Wode, mad.

2 As blive, quickly.

And grevé the par chauncé both,
Which shall be to theedouble shame
Most for the hindringe of thy name,
That thou for slouth of any love
Shalt so thy lustés set above
And leve of armés the knighthode,
Whiche is the prise of thy manhode
And oughté first to be desired.'

"But he, which had his herté
fired,

Upon his wife, whan he this herd,
Nought o¹ word there ayein an-
swerd,

But torneth home halving ashamed
And hath within him self so tamed
His herté, that all the sotie
Of lové for chivalerie

He lefte, and be him leef or loth
To Troié with hem forth he goth
That he him mighté nought excuse.

Thus stant it, if a knight refuse
The lust of armés to travaile;
There may no worldés ese availé,
But if worshipé be with all.
And that hath shewéd overall,

For it sit wel in allé wise
A knight to ben of high emprise
And putten allé drede away,
For in this wise I have heid say,

"The worthy knight Prothe-
salay

On his passagé where he lay
Towardés Troié thilké siege
She which was all his owné liege
Laodomie his lusty wife,
Which for his lové was pensife
As he whiche all her herté hadde,
Upon a thing wherof she dradde
A letter for to make him dwelle
Fro Troié send him, thus to telle,
How she hath axéd of the wise
Touchend of him in suche a wise,
That they have done her under-
stonde,

¹ O, one.

Towardés other how so it stonde,
The destiné it hath so shape,
That heshall nought the deth escape
In cas that he arrive at Troy.

Forthy as to her worldés joy
With all her herté she him preide
And many another cause alleide,
That he with her at home abide.
But he hath cast her letter aside
As he which tho no maner hede
Toke of her wommanisché drede
And forth he goth, as nought ne
were,

To Troy, and was the firsté there
Which londeth and toke arrivaile,
For him was lever in the bataile
He saith to deien as a knight
Than for to live in all his might
And be reprovéd of his name.
Lo, thus upon the worldés fame
Knighthode hath ever yet beset,
Which with no cowardis is let.

"Of kingé Saul also I finde,
Whan Samuel out of his kinde,
Through that the Phitonesse hath
lered,

In Samarié was arered¹
Long time aftér that he was dede.
The kingé Saul him axeth rede,
If that he shall go fight or none.
And Samuel him said anone:
The firsté day of the bataile
Thou shalt be slain withouté faile
And Jonathas thy sone also.
But how as ever it felle so,
This worthy knight of his coráge
Hath undertaké the viáge
And woldé nought his knighthode
let²

For no perill he couthé set;
Wherof that bothe his sone and he
Upon the mounte of Gelboé
Assemblen with her enemies.
For they knighthode of such a pris

¹ Arrered, raised up.

² Let, hinder.

By oldé daiés thanné helden,
That they none other thing be-
helden.

And thus the fader for worship
Forth with his sone of felaship
Through lust of armés weren dede
As men may in the bible rede,
They whos knighthode is yet in
mínde

And shall be to the worldés ende.

“And for to loken overmore
It hath and shall ben evermore,
That of knighthodé the prowesse
Is grounded upon hardiesse
Of him that dare wel undertake.
And who that wolde ensample take
Upon the forme of knightés lawe,
How that Achilles was forth drawe
With Chiro, which Centaurus hight,
Of many a wonder here he might.
For it stood thilké timé thus,
That this Chiro this Centaurus
Within a largé wilderness,
Where was león and leonesse,
The lepard and the tigre also
With hert and hindé, buk and doo,
Had his dwelling as tho befell
Of Peleon upon the hill,
Wherof was thanné mochel speche,
There hath Chiro this child to teche
What time he was of twelve yere
age.

Wherefore to maken his corage
The more hardý by other way
In the forést to hunt and pley,
Whan that Achilles walké wolde
Centaurus bad that he ne sholde
After no besté make his chas
Which woldé fleen out of his place
As buk and doo and hert and hinde,
With which he may no werré finde.
Buttho that wolden him withistonde,
There shuld he with his dart on
honde

Upon the tigre and the león

Purchase and make his venisón,¹
As to a knight is accordaúnt.
And therupon a covaunant
This Chiro with Achilles set,
That every day withouten let
He shuldé such a cruel beste
Or sle or wounden atté leste,
So that he might a token bring
Of blood upon his home comfng.
And thus of that Chiro him taught
Achilles such an herté caught,
That he no more a leon drad
Whan he his dart on hondé had
Than if a león were an asse.
And that hath made him for to passe
All other knightés of his dede,
Whan it cam to the greté nede,
As it was afterward wel knowe.

“Lo, thus, my soné, thou might
knowe

“That the coráge of hardiesse
Is of knighthodé the prowesse,
Which is to Lové suffisaúnt
Aboven all the remenaunt
That unto Lovés Court pursue.
But who that wol no Slouth eschue
Upon knighthode and nought tra-
vaile

I not what love him shuld availé,
But every labour axeth why
Of some reward, wherof that I
Ensamples couthé tel inough
Of hem that toward lové drough
By oldé daiés, as they shulde.”—

“My fader, therof here I
wolde.”—

“My sone, it is wel resonáble
In placé which is honourable
If that a man his herté sette,
That than he for no Slouthé lette
To do what longeth to manhede.
For if thou wolt the bokés rede
Of Launcelot and other mo,
Theremight thou seen howit was tho

¹ *l'ensoun*, hunted game.

Of armés, for they wold atteigne
To Lové which withouten peine
May nought be get of Idelnesse. .
And that I také to witnésse
An old cronique in speciall,
The whiche into memoriall
Is writé, for his loves sake
How that a knight shal undertake.

Ther was a king, which Oënes
Was hoten and he under pees
Held Calidoine in his empire
And had a doughter Deianire ;
Men wist in thulke timé none
So fair a wight as she was one.
And as she was a lusty wight,
Right so was than a noble knight,
To whom Mercúrie fader was.
This knight the two pillérs of bras,
The whiche yet a man may finde,
Set up in the desért of Ynde,
That was the worthy Hercules,
Whos namé shall be endéles
For the merveiles which he wrought.
This Hercules the lové sought
Of Deianire, and of his thing
Unto her fader which was king
He spake touchénd of mariáge.
The king knowénd his high lignáge
And drad also his mightés sterne
To him ne durst his doughter
werne¹

And nethéles, this he him saide,
How Achelous, er he, first preide
To wedden her, and in accorde
They stood, as it was of recórde.
But for all that this he him graunteth,
That which of hem that other
daunteth

In armés, him she shuldé take,
And that the king hath undertake.
This Achelous was a geaúnt,
A subtil man, a déceivaúnt,

¹ *Werne*, refuse.

Which through magique and sorcerie

Couth all the worlde of trecherie.
And whan that he this talé herde,
How upon that the king answerde,
With Hercules he musté feight,
He trusteth nought upon his sleight
Al onely, whan it cometh to nede ;
But that which voideth allé drede
And every noble herté stereth,
The lové that no life forbereth
For his lady whom he desireth,
With hardiesse his herté fieth,
And send him word withouté faile,
That he wold také the bataile.
They setten day, they chosen felde,
The knightés covered under shelde
To-gider come at timé sette
And eché one is with other mette.
It fel they foughten both on foot,
There was no stone, there was no
root,

Whiche mighté letten hem the wey,
But all was voide and take away.
They smiten strokés but a fewe,
For Hercules, which wolde shewe
His greté strengthe as forthe nones,
He stert upon him all at ones
And caught him in his armés
stronge.

This gaunt wote he may nought
longe

Endure under so hardé bondes,
And thought he wold out of his
hondes

By sleight in some manér escape.
And as he couthe him self forshape,
In likenesse of an adder he slpte
Out of his honde and forth he
skipte ;

And este, as he that fighté wolle,
He torneth him into a bolle
And gan to belwe in suche a soune,
As though the world shuld al go
doun.

The grounde he sporneth and he
traunceth,
His largé hornés he avaunceth
And cast hem here and there
aboute.

But he which stant of hem no
doubte

Awaiteth wel whan that he cam
And him by bothé hornes nam
And all at onés he him caste
Unto the grounde and held him
faste,

That he ne mighté with no sleight
Out of his hond get upon height,
Till he was overcome and yolde,
And Hercules hath what he wolde.
The kinge him graunteth to fulfille
His axing at his owné wille ; .
And she, for whom he haddé served,
Her thought he hath her wel de-
served.

"**Enceas** eke within Itaile
Ne had he wonné the bataile
And done his might so besily
Aycin king Turne his enemy,
He haddé nought Laviné wonne,
But for he hath him over ronne
And gete his pris, he gat her love.

"By these ensamples here above
Lo, now, my sone, as I have told,
Thou might wel se, who that is bold
And bar travaile and undertake
The cause of Love, he shall be take
The rather unto Lovés grace ;
For comunliche in worthy place
The women loven worthinesse
Of mauhode and of gentillesse,
For the gentils ben most desired."—

"**My fader**, but I were enspired
Through lore of you, I wot no way
What gentillesse is for to say,
Wherof to telle I you beseche."—

"The ground, my soné, for to
seche
Upon this diffinición

The worldes constitución
Hath set the name of gentillesse
Upon the fortune of richesse,
Which of long time is falle in age.
Than is a man of high lignage
After the forme as thou might here
But no thing after the matére.
For who that reson understand
Upon richesse it may nought stond,
For that is thing which fauleth ofte.
For he that stant to day alofte
And all the worlde hath in his
wones,¹

To morwe he falleth all at ones
Out of richesse into pouerte ;
So that therof is no deserte,
Which gentillesse maketh abide.
And for to loke on other side
How that a gentilman is bore,
Adam, whiche allé was to-fore
With Eve his wife, as of hem two,
All was aliché gentil tho ;
So that of generacion,
To maké declaración,
There may no gentillesse be.
For to the reson if we se
Of mannés birthé the mesure,
It is so comun to nature,
That it yiveth every man aliche,
As well to the pouer as to the riche,
For naked they ben boré bothe ;
The lorde hath no more for to clothe
As of him self that ilké throwe,
Than hath the pouerest of the rowe.
And whan they shullen bothé passe,
I not of hem whiche hath the lasse
Of worldés good, but as of charge
The lorde is moré for to charge,
Whan God shall his accompté here.
For he hath had his lustés here.
But of the body which shall deie,
All though there be diversé wey
To deth, yet is there but one ende,
To which that every man shall wende

¹ *Wones*, dwellings.

As well the begger as the lorde
 Of o¹ natüre, of one accorde.
 She, which our oldé moder is,
 The erthé bothé that and this
 Receiveth and alich devoureth,
 That she to nouthér part favouéreth.
 So wote I nothing after kinde,
 Where I may gentilessé finde,
 For lacke of vertue lacketh grace,
 Wherof richesse in many place
 Whan men best wené for to stonde
 All sodeinly goth out of honde:
 But vertue set in the coráge,
 There may no world be so salváge,
 Which might it take and done away
 Till whanné that the body deie;
 And than he shall be richéd so,
 That it may failé nevermo.
 So that may well be gentillesse,
 Which yiveth so great a sikernesse,
 For after the condiciön
 Of resonáble entenciön,
 The which out of the soulé groweth
 And the Vertue fro Vicé knoweth,
 Wherof a mañ the Vice eschueth
 Withouté Slouth, and Vertue suéth,
 That is a verray gentelman:
 And nothing ellés whiche he can
 Ne which he hath, newlich he may.
 But for all that yet now a day
 In Lovés Court to taken hede,
 The pouer Vertue shall nought
 spede,
 Where that the riché Vicé woweth.
 For selde it is, that Love alloweth
 The gentil man withouten good,
 Though his condition be good.
 But if a man of bothé two
 Be riche and vertuous also,
 Than is he well the moré worth.
 But yet to put him selvé forth
 He must done al his besinesse,
 For nouthér good ne gentillesse
 May helpen hem whiche idel be.

¹ O, one.

But who that woll in his degre
 Travailé so as it belongeth,
 It happeth ofté that he fongeth
 Worshíp and esé bothé two.
 For ever yet it hath be so,
 That love honést in sondry wey
 Profiteth, for it doth away
 The Vice, and as the bokés sain,
 It maketh curteis to the vilain
 And to the coward hardiesse
 It yiveth, so that the verray prowesse
 Is causéd upon Lovés reule
 To him that can manhodé reule,
 And eke toward the womanhede,
 Who that therof woll taken hede.
 For they the better affaited be
 In every thinge, as men may se,
 For love hath ever his lustés grene
 In gentil folke, as it is sene,
 Which thing there may no kind
 areste.

I trowé, that there is no beste,
 If he with lové shulde acqueint,
 That he ne woldé make it queint
 As for the whilé that it laste.
 And thus I conclude atté laste,
 That they ben idel, as me semeth,
 Whiche unto thing that Lové
 demeth

Forslouthen that they shulden do;
 And over this, my sone, also
 After the Vertue morall eke
 To speke of Love, if I shall seke,
 Among the holy bokés wise,
 I findé write in suche a wise
 Who loveth nought is here as dede,
 For Love above all other is hede.
 Whiche hath the Vertues for to
 lede,

Of all that unto mannés dede
 Belongeth. For of idelship
 He hateth all the felaship,
 For Slouth is ever to despise,
 Whiche in disdeigne hath all ap-
 prise,

And that accordeth nought to man.
 For he that wit and reson can,
 It sit him wel that he travaille
 Upon such thing which might availe.
 For idelship is nought comended,
 But every law it hath defended.¹
 And in ensample thereupon
 The noble wisé Salomon,
 Whiche had of every thing insight,
 Saith: 'As the briddes to the flight
 Ben madé, so the man is bore
 To labour,'² whiche is nought forbore
 To hem that thenken for to thrive.
 For we, whiché nowe are alive,
 Of hem that besy whilom were
 Als wel in scole as ellés where
 Now every day ensample take,
 That if it weré now to make
 Thing which that they first founden
 out,
 It sholdé nought be brought about.
 Her² livés thanné weré longe,
 Her wittés great, her mightés
 stronge,
 Her hertés full of besinesse,
 Wherof the worldés redinesse
 In body both and in coráge
 Stant ever upon his avauntáge.
 And for to drawe into memoire
 Her namés both and her histoire,
 Upon the vertu of her dede
 In sondry bokés thou might rede.
 "Of every wisdom the parfit
 The highé God of his spirit
 Yaf unto men in erthé here
 Upon the forme and the matere
 Of that he woldé make hem wise.
 And thus cam in the first apprise
 Of bokés and of allé good
 Through hem that whilom under-
 stood

The loré which to hem was yive,
 Wherof these other that now live
 Ben every day to lerné new.

¹ Defended, forbidden.

² Her, their.

But er the timé that men sue¹
 And that the labour forth it brought,
 There was no corn, though men it
 sought,

In none of all the feldés oute.
 And er the wisdom cam aboute
 Of hem that first the bokés write,
 This may wel every wise man wite,
 There was great labour eke also.
 Thus was none idel of the two:
 That one the plough hath undertake
 With labour which the hond hath
 take;

That other toke to studie and muse
 As he which woldé nought refuse
 The labour of his wittés alle.
 And in this wise it is befallé
 Of labour which that they begonne
 We be now taught of that we conne.
 Her besinesse is yet to sene,
 That it stant ever aliché grenc,
 All be it so the body deie
 The name of hem shall never away.
 In the croniqué as I finde
 Cham, whos labouir is yet in minde,
 Was he which first the letters fonde
 And wrote in Hebreu with hishonde,
 Of natural philosophy
 He found first also the clergý.
 Cadmus the letters of Gregois
 First made upon his owné choise.
 Theges of thing which shal befallé
 He was the first augure of alle.
 And Philemon by the visagé
 Found to descrivé the coráge.
 Claudius, Esdras and Sulpicés,
 Trismégist, Pyth'g'ras, Frige
 Dares,²

Menander and Epícúrus,
 Solinus, Pandas, Josephús

¹ Sue, sowed seed

² *Frigidilles* of the MS. is evidently Phrygian Dares, whose Trojan Chronicle was then of high authority. As Epicurus was a friend of Menander's—they were born in the same year—he must be the writer whom the MS. calls Ephiloquorus.

The firsté were of enditoúrs
 Of old croníque and eke auctoúrs.
 And Herodot in his sciéce
 Of metre, of rime and of cadence
 The firsté was of which men note.
 And of musique also the note
 In mannés voise or softe or sharpe
 That founde Jubál. And of the harpe
 The mery souné, whiche is to like,
 That foundé Paulius with phisique.
 Zeuxis found first the portreture,
 And Promethéus the sculptúre,
 After what formé that hein thought
 The resemblaunce anon they
 wrought.

Tubal in iron and in stele
 Found first the forge and wrought
 it wele,

And Jadahel, as saith the boke,
 First madé nette and fisshes toke.
 Of hunting eke he found the chace,
 Which now is knowe in many place;
 A tent of cloth with corde and stake
 He set up first and did it make.

Berconius of cokerie
 First madé the delicacie.
 The craft Minerve of wollé fonde
 And madé cloth her owné honde.
 And Delbora made it of linc,¹
 The women were of great engíne.²
 But thing which yiveth us mete and
 drinke

And doth the labour for to swinke
 To till the londes and set the vines,
 Wherof the cornés and the wines
 Ben sustenaúncé to mankinde,
 In oldé bokés as I finde,
 Saturnus of his owné wit
 Hath foundé first, and moré yit
 Of chapmenhode he found the wey
 And eke to coigné the money
 Of sondry metal, as it is,
 He was the firsté man of this.
 But how that metal cam a place

¹ *Line*, linen.

² *Engíne*, ingenuity.

Through mannés wit and goddés
 grace

The route of philosóphres wise
 Contreveden by sondry wise
 First for to get it out of mine
 And after for to trie and fine.
 And also with great diligence
 They foundé thilke experience,
 Which clepéd is alconomy,¹
 Wherof the silver multiply
 They made, and eke the golde also.
 And for to telle howe it is so,
 Of bodies seven in speciáll
 With fouré spirits joint withall
 Stant the substance of this matére.
 The bodies whiche I speke of here
 Of the planettés ben begonne.
 The golde is titled to the Sonne,
 The Mone of silver hath his part,
 And iron that stond upon Mart,
 The leed after Satorne groweth,
 And Jupiter the brass bestoweth,
 The copper set is to Venús,
 And to his part Mercuriús
 Hath the quick silver, as it falleth,
 The whiche after the boke it calleth
 Is first of thilké fouré named
 Of spirités which ben proclaimed.
 And the spírt, whiche is secounde
 In sal ammoniak is founde.
 The thriddé spirit sulphur is,
 The fourthé suende after this
 Arsenicum by name is hote.
 With blowing and with fíres hote
 In thesé thingés, whiche I say,
 They worchen by diversé way.
 For as the philosóphre tolde,
 Of golde and silver they ben holde
 Two principal extremities,
 To whiche all other by degrees
 Of the metalles ben accordaúnt.
 And so through kindé resemblaúnt,
 That what man couthe awaíe take
 The rust of which they waxen blacke,

¹ *Alconomy*, alchemy.

And the savour of the hardnesse,
They shulden také the likenesse
Of golde or silver parfitly.
But for to worche it sikerly
Betwene the corps and the spirít,
Er that the metall be parfít,
In seven formés it is set
Of all. And if that one be let ¹
The remenaunt may nought availe,
But other wise it may nought faile.
For they by whom this art was
founde,

To every point a certain bounde
Ordeignen, that a man may finde
This craft is wrought by wey of
kinde

So that there is no fallas inne.
But what man that this werk be-
ginne,

He mote awaite at every tide,
So that nothing be left aside.
First of the distillation
Forth with the congelation
Solucion, discention,
And kepe in his entencion
The point of sublimation,
And forth with calcination
Of verray approbation
Do that there be fixation
With tempred hetés of the fire,
Till he the parfit elixire
Of thilké philosóphres stone
May gete, of which that many one
Of philosóphres whilom write.
And if thou wolt the namés wite
Of thilké stone with other two
Whiche as the clerkés maden tho,
So as the bokés it recorden,
The kinde of hem I shall recorden.

"These olde philosóphres wise
By wey of kinde in sondry wise
Thre stonés madé through clergy.²
The firste if I shall specify,
Was clepéd *vegetabilis*,

¹ Let, impeded.

² Clergy, learning.

Of which the propre vertue is
To mannés helé for to serve
As for to kepe and to preserve
The body fro sikenesses alle,
Till deth of kinde upon him falle.

"The stone secónde I thee behote
Is *lapis animalis* hote,
The whose vertue is propre and
couth

For ere and eye and nase and mouth,
Wherof a man may here and se
And smelle and taste in his degre.
And for to fele and for to go
It helpeth a man, of bothé two
The wittés five he underfongeth
To kepe as it to him belongeth.

"The thriddé stone in speciáll
By name is clepéd *minerall*,
Which the métalles of every mine
Attempreth till that they ben fine,
And pureth hem by such a wey
That all the vicé goth away
Of rust, of stinke and of hardnesse.
And whan they ben of such clen-
nesse,

This nunciáll, so as I finde,
Transformeth all the firsté kinde
And maketh hem able to conceive
Through his vertúe and to receive
Both in substaúnce and in figúre
Of golde and silver the nature.
For they two ben thextremities
To whiche after the properties
Hath every metal his desire
With helpe and comfort of the fire
Forth with this stone, as it is said,
Which to the Sonne and Mone is laid;
For to the redde and to the white
This stone hath power to profite,
It maketh multiplication
Of golde and the fixation
It causeth, and of his habite
He doth the werke to be parfite
Of thilke elixir: which men calle
Alconomy, as is befallé

To hem that whilom weré wise.
 But nowe it stant all otherwise.
 They speken fast of thilké stone,
 But how to make it now wot none
 After the sothe expérience.
 And nethéles great diligéce
 They setten upon thilké dede
 And spillen moré than they spede.
 For allé way they finde a lette¹
 Which bringeth in pouerte and dette
 To hem, that riché were afore.
 The loss is had, the lucre is lore,
 To get a pound they spenden five,
 I not how such a craft shall thrive
 In the manér as it is used.
 It weré better be refused
 Than for to worchen upon wene²
 In thing which stant nought as they
 wene.

But noughtforthý, who that it knewe,
 The science of him self is trewe
 Upon the forme as it was founded,
 Wherof the namés yet be groundéd
 Of hem that first it founden out.
 And thus the famé goth about
 To such as soughten besinesse
 Of vertue and of worthinesse,
 Of whom if I the namés calle.
 Hermes was one the first of alle,
 To whom this art is most applied.
 Geber therof was magnified
 And Ortolan and Morien,
 Among the which is Avicen,
 Which found and wrote a great
 partie

The practique of alconomie.
 Whose bokés plainly, as they stonde
 Upon this craft, few understonde;
 But yet to put hem in assay,
 There ben full many now a day
 That knowen litel what they mene.
 It is nought one to wite and wene
 In forme of wordes they it trete,
 But yet they failen of beyete,

¹ Lette, hindrance. ² Wene, expectation.

For of to moche or of to lite
 There is algaté found a wite,¹
 So that they solwe nought the line
 Of the parfité medicine,
 Which groundéd is upon natúre.
 But they that writen the scripture
 Of Greke, Arabe and of Caldee,
 They were of suche auctorité,
 That they first founden out the way
 Of all that thou hast herd me say,
 Wherof the cronique of her lore
 Shall stonde in prise for evermore.
 But toward ouré marches here
 Of the Latíns, if thou wolt here
 Of hem that whilom vertuóus
 Were and therto laborióus,
 Carmenté made of her engine
 The firsté letters of Latine,
 Of which the tungé Romain cam,
 Wherof that Aristarchus nam
 Forth with Donat and Dindimus
 The firsté reule of scole, as thus
 How that Latín shall be compounéd
 And in what wise it shall be sounéd,
 That every word in his degré
 Shall stond upon congruité.
 And thilké time at Rome also
 Ther was Tullíus Cicero
 That writeth upon rethorique,
 How that men shuld her wordés
 pike

After the forme of eloquence,
 Which is, men sain, a great pru-
 dence.

And after that out of Hebrew
 Jeromé, which the langage knew,
 The Biblein which the lawe is closed
 Into Latine he hath transposed.
 And many an other writer eke
 Out of Caldee, Arabe and Greke
 With great labouér the bokes wise
 Translateden. And otherwise
 The Latins of hem self also
 Her study at thilké timé so

¹ Wite, blame.

With great travaile of scolé toke
In sondry formé for to boke,
That we may take her evidences
Upon the lore of the sciences,
Of craftes bothe and of clergie ;
Among the whiche in poesie
To the lovér's Ovidé wrote
And taught, if lové be to hote,
In what maner it shulde akele.

"Forthy my sone, if that thou
fele,

That Lové wringé the to sore,
Behold Ovide and take his lore."—

"My fader, if they mighté spede
My love, I wolde his bokés rede.
And if they techen to restreigne
My love, it were an idel peine
To lerne a thing which may nought
be,

For lich unto the grené tre
If that men take his root away,
Right so min herté shuldé deie
If that my lové be withdrawe.
Wherof touchénd unto this sawe
There is but onely to pursue
My Love, and Idelship escheue."—

"My godé soné, soth to say,
If there be siker any way
To lové, thou hast said the best.
For who that woll have all his rest
And do no travaile at the nede,
It is no reson that he spede
In Lové's causé for to winne.
For he which dare nothing beginne,
I not what thinge he shulde acheve.
But over this thou shalt beleve,
So as it sit thee well to knowe,
That there ben other Vices slowe,
Which unto Lové don great lette,
If thou thin hert upon hem sette.

Toward the slowé progeny
There is yet one of compaigny,
And he is clepéd Sompnolence,
Which doth to Slouth his reverence
As he which is his chamberlein,

That many an hunderd time hath
lein

To slepé whan he shuldé wake.
He hath with Lové trewes take,
That waké who so waké will,
If he may couche adown his bill
He hath all wowéd what him list,
That oft he goth to bed unkist
And saith, that for no druéry
He woll nought leve his sluggardy.
For though no man it wold allowe,
To slepé lever than to wowe
Is his manér, and thus on nightes,
Whan he seeth the lusty knightes
Revcen where these women are,
Awey he skulketh as an hare
And goth tobed and laith him softe ;
And of his Slouth he dremeth ofte,
How that he sticketh in the mire,
And how he sitteth by the fire
And claweth on his baré shankes.
And how he climeth up the bankes
And falleth in the slades¹ depe.
But thanné who so také kepe
Whan he is fall in suche a dreme
Right as a ship ayein the streime
He routeth with a slepy noise
And brustleth as a monkés froise²
Whan it is throwe into the panne.
And otherwhilé seldé whanne
That he may dreme a lusty sweven,
Him thinketh as though he were
in heven

And as the world were holy his ;
And than he speket of that and this
And maketh his exposition
After his disposition
Of that he wold, in such a wise
He doth to Love all his servise,
I not what thank he shall deserve.
But sone, if thou wolt Lové serve,
I redé that thou do nought so."—

"Ha, godé fader, certés no.
I haddé lever by my trowth,

¹ *Slades*, valleys.

² *Froise*, pancake.

Er I were set on such a Slouth
And beré such a slepy snout,
Bothe eyen of my hede were out.
For me were better-fully deie
Than I of suché sluggardie
Had any namé, God me shielde.

“For certes, fader Genius,
Yet unto now it hath be thus
At allé time if it befelle
So that I mighté come and dwelle
In placé there my lady were,
I was nought slow ne slepy there.
For than I dare well undertake,
That whan her list on nightés wake
Inchambre as to caróle and daunce,
Me thenketh I may me more
avaunce

If I may gone upon her honde,
Than if I wonne a kingés londe.
For whan I may her hond beclippe,
With such gladnésse I daunce and
skippe
Me thenketh I touché nought the
floor,

Theroo, which renneth on the moor,
Is thanné nought so light as I.
So now ye witen all forthy,
That for the timé slepe I hate.
And whan it falleth other gate,
So that her liké nought to daunce,
But on the dees to casté chaunce,
Or axe of Lové some demaunde,
Or ellés that her list commaunde
To rede and here of Troilus,—
Right as she wold, or so or thus,
I am all redy to consent.
And if so is, that I may hent
Somtime amonge a good leisr,
So as I dare of my desir
I telle a part, but whan I prey,
Anone she biddeth me go my wey
And saith: ‘It is fer in the night:’
And I swere, it is even light.
But as it falleth atté laste,
There may no worldés joic laste,

So mote I nedés fro her wende
And of my wacché make an ende.
And if she thanné hedé toke
How pitouslich on her I loke,
Whan that I shall my levé take,
Her ought of mercy for to slake
Her daunger, which saith ever nay.
But he saith often, ‘Have good day,’
That loth is for to take his leve.
Therforé while I may beleve,¹
I tarie forth the night alonge.
For it is nought on me alonge
To slepé that I so soone go
Till that I mote algaté so,
And thanne I biddé: ‘God her se,’
And so down knelende on my kne
I také leve, and if I shall
I kisse her and go forth withall.
And other while, if that I dore,²
Er I come fully atté dore,
I torne ayein and feigne a thing,
As though I haddé lost a ring
Or somewhat ellés, for I wolde
Kisse her eftsoné, if that I sholde.
But selden is, that I so spede.
And whan I se that I mot nede
Departen, I departe, and thanne
With all my herte I curse and
banne

That ever slepe was made for eye.
For as me thenketh I might drie³
Withouté slepe to waken ever
So that I shuldé nought dissever
Fro her in whom is all my light.
And than I curse also the night
With all the will of my coráge
And say: ‘Away thou black ymáge,
Which of thy derké cloudy face
Makest all the worldés light deface
And caustest unto slepe a way,
By which I mot now gone away
Out of my ladies compaignie.
O slepy night, I thee defie,

¹ *Beleve*, remain.² *Dore*, dare.³ *Drie*, endure.

And woldé that thou lay in presse
 With Proserpiné the goddesse
 And with Pluto the hellé king.
 For till I se the daiés spring,
 I setté slepe nought at a risshe,^{*}
 And with that worde I sigh and
 wisse

And say: 'Ha, why ne were it day,
 For yet my lady than I may
 Beholdé, though I do no more.
 But slepe,—I not wherof it serveth,
 Of which no man his thank de-
 serveth

To get him love in any place,
 But is an hindrer of his grace
 And maketh hem dede as for a
 throwe

Right as a stoke were overthrowe.
 And so, my fader, in this wise
 The slepy nightés I despise
 And ever amiddés of my tale
 I thenke upon the nightingale.
 Which slepeth nought by wey of
 kinde

For love, in bokés as I finde.
 Thus atté last I go to bedde
 And yet min herté lith to wedde
 With her where as I camé fro,
 Though I departe he wold nought so.
 There is no lock may shet him out,
 Him nedeth nought to gon about
 That percé may the hardé wal,
 Thus is he with her overall.
 And thus my selven I torment,
 Til that the dedé slepe me hent.
 But thanné by a thousand score
 Wel moré than I was to-forc
 I am tormented in my slepe,
 But that I dreme is nought on shepe,
 For I ne thenké nought on wulle,
 But I am drecched¹ to the fulle
 Of Lové that I have to kepe,
 That now I laugh and now I wepe
 And now I lese and now I winne

¹ Drecched, troubled, vexed.

And now I ende and now beginne.
 And other while I dreme and mete,¹
 That I aloné with her mete
 And that Daunger is left behinde.
 And than in slepe such joy I finde,
 That I ne bedé never awake.
 But after, whan I hedé take,
 And shall arise upon the morwe,
 Than is all tornéd into sorwe,
 Nought for the cause I shall arise,
 But for I mette² in suche a wise,
 And atté last I am bethought,
 'That all is vein and helpeth nought,
 But yet me thenketh by my wille
 I wold have lay and slepé stille
 To meten ever of such a sweven,³
 For than I had a slepy heven.'—

"My sone, and for thou tellest so,
 A man may finde of time ago,
 That manyasweven hath becertain,
 All be it so that som men sain
 That swevens ben of no credence.
 But for to shewe in evidence
 That they full ofté sqthé things
 Betoken, I thenke in my writnges
 To telle a talé therupon,
 Which fell by oldé daiés gone.

"**Thi**s finde I writen in poesy.
 Ceix the king of Troceny
 Hadde Alceoné to his wife,
 Which as her owné hertés life
 Him loveth. And he had also
 A brother, which was clepéd tho
 Dedalion, and he par cas
 Fro kinde of man forshapé was
 Into a goshauke for likenesse;
 Wherof this king great hevinesse
 Hath take and thought in his coráge
 To gone upon a pelrinage
 Into a straungé región,
 Where he hath his devoción
 To done his sacrifice and prey
 If that he might in any wey

¹ Mete, dream.

² Mette, dreamt.

³ Sweven, a dream.

Toward the goddés findé grace^t
 His brothers helé to purchase,
 So that he mighté be reformed
 Of that he haddé be transformed.
 To this purpóse and to this ende
 This king is redy for to wende
 As he which woldé go by ship.
 And for to done him felaship
 His wife unto the see him brought
 Withall her herte, and him besought
 That he the time her woldé sain
 Whan that he thoughté come ayein.
 Within, he saith, two monthés day.
 And thus in allé haste he may
 He toke his leve and forth hesaileth,
 Wepend and she hêr self bewaileth
 And torneth home there she camfro.
 But whan the monthés were ago,
 The which he set of his coming,
 And that she herdé no tidíng,
 There was no caré for to seche
 Wherof the goddés to besече.
 Tho she began in many a wise
 And to Juno her sacrifice
 Above all other most she dede
 And for her lord she hath so hêde
 To wite and knowe how that he ferd,
 That Juno the goddesse her herde
 Anone, and upon this matere
 She badde Yrís her messagere
 To Slepés hous that she shal wende
 And bid him that he make an ende
 By sweven, and shewe all the cas
 Unto this lady how it was.

“This Yris fro the highé stage,
 Whiche undertake hath the mes-
 sage,
 Her reiny copé did upon,
 The which was wonderly begone
 With colours of diversé hewe
 An hunderd mo tlian men it knewe,
 The heven liche unto a bowe
 She bende, and she cam downé lowe
 The God of Slepe where that she
 fond,

And that was in a straungé lond
 Which marcheth¹ upon Chimery.
 For there, as saith the poesy,
 The God of Slepe hath made his
 hous,

Whiche of entaile is merveilous.

“Under an hill there is a cave
 Which of the sonné may nought
 have,

So that no man may knowe aright
 The point betwene the day and
 night.

There is no fire, there is no sparke,
 There is no doré which may charke,²
 Wherof an eyé shulde unshet,
 So that inwárd there is no let.
 And for to speke of that withoute,
 Therestant no great tre nigh aboute,
 Wheron there mighté crowe or pie
 Alighté for to clepe or crie.

There is no cock to crowé day,
 Ne besté none which noisé may
 The hille, but all abouté round
 There is growénd upon the ground
 Poppy, which bereth the sede of
 slepe,

With other herbés suche an hepc.
 A stillé water for the nones
 Rennénd upon the smallé stones,
 Which hight of Lethés the rivér,
 Under that hille in such manér
 There is, which yiveth great ap-
 petite

To slepe. And thus ful of delite
 Slepe hath his hous, and of his
 couche

Within his chambre if I shall touche
 Of hebenus that slepy tre
 The bordés all abouté be,
 And for he shuldé slepé softe
 Upon a fether bed alofte
 He lith with many a pilwe of down,
 The chambre is strowéd up and
 down

¹ *Marcheth*, borders.

² *Charke*, creak.

CONFESSIO AMANTIS.

With swevenés many a thousand
fold.

Thus came Yrís into this holde
And to the bed, whiche is all black,
She goth, and ther with Slepe she
spake,

And in this wise as she was bede
The message of Junó she dede.
Full ofte her wordés she reherceth,
Er she his slepy érés perceth
With mochel wo. But atté laste
His slombrend eyen he upcaste
And said her, that it shal be do,
Wherof amonge a thousand tho
Within his hous that slepy were
In speciáll he chese out there
Thre, whiché shulden do this dede.
The first of hem, so as I rede,
Was Morpheus, the whose nature
Is for to také the figure

Of that personé that him liketh,
Wherof that he ful ofte entriketh¹
The life which slepé shal by night.
And Ithecus that other hight,
Which hath the vois of every souné,
The chere and the condicioún
Of every life what so it is.

The thriddé suend after this
Is Panthasas, which may transforme
Of every thing the righté forme
And chaunge it in another kinde.
Upon hem thre, so as I finde,
Of swevens stant all thápparénce,
Which other while is evidence
And other whilé but a jape.²

But nethéles it is so shape,
That Morpheús by night alone
Appereth unto Alceone
In likenesse of her husébonde
Al naked dede upon the stronde,
And how he dreint³ in speciáll
These other two it shewen all,
The tempest of the blacké cloude

The wodé¹ see, the windés loude
All this she met,² and sigh him
deien,

Wherof that she began to crien
Slepend abeddé there she lay.
And with that noise of her affray
Her women sterten up aboute,
Whiche of her lady were in doubte
And axen her how that she ferde.
And she right as she sigh and herde
Her sweven hath tolde hem every
dele.

And they it halsen³ alle wele
And sain, it is a token of good :
But til she wist how that it stood,
She hath no comfort in her herte.
Upon the morwe and up she sterte
And to the see where as she met²
The body lay withoute lete
She drough, and whanné she cam
nigh

Starke dede, his armés sprad, she
sigh

Her lord fleténd upon the wawe,
Wherof her wittés be withdrawe.
And she which toke of deth no kepe,
Anone forth lepte into the depe
And wold have caught him in her
arme.

This infortúne of double harme
The goddés from the heven above
Beheld, and for the trouthe of love
Whiche in this worthy lady stood,
They have upon the salté flood
Her dreinté lorde and her also
Fro deth to lifé torned so,
That they ben shapen into briddes
Swimmend upon the wawe amiddes.
And whan she sigh her lord livénd
In likenesse of a bird swimménd,
And she was of the samé sort,
So as she mighté do disport
Upon the joié which she hadde,

¹ *Entriketh*, deceives. ² *Jape*, trick, jest.
³ *Dreint*, was drowned.

¹ *Wodé*, raging. ² *Met*, dreamed.
³ *Halsen*, embrace.

Her wingés both abrode she spradde
 And him so as she may suffice
 Beclipt and kist in suche a wise
 As she was whilome wont to do.
 Her wingés for her armés two
 She toke and for her lippés softe
 Her hardé bille, and so ful ofte
 She fondeth in her briddés forme,
 If that she might her self conforme
 To do the plesaunce of a wife
 As she did in that other life.
 Forthoug she hadde her power lore
 Her will stood as it was to-fore,
 And serveth him so as she may.
 Wherof into this ilké day
 To-gider upon thē see they wone.¹
 Where many a doughter and a sone
 They bringen forth of briddés
 kinde.

And for men shulden take in minde
 This Alceon the trewé queene,
 Her briddés yet as it is sene
 Of Alceon² the namé bere.

“Lo thus, my sone, it may thee
 stere

Of swevens for to také kepe;
 For ofté time a man a slepe
 May se what after shall betide.
 Forthý it helpeth at some tide
 A man to slepe as it belongeth;
 But Slouthé no lye underfongeth
 Whiche is to Love appertenaunt.”—

“My fader, upon the covenauant
 I daré wel make this avowe,
 Of allé my life into nowé
 Als fer as I can understonde
 Yet took I never slepe on honde
 Whan it was timé for to wake,
 For though min eye it woldé take,
 Min herte is ever there ayein.
 But nethéles to speke it plein
 All this that I have said you here
 Of my wakinge, as ye may here,
 It toucheth to my lady swete,

¹ *Wone*, dwell.

² *Alceon*, halcyon.

For other wise I you behete,¹
 In straungé placé whan I go
 Me list no thing to waké so.
 For whan the women listen play
 And I her se nought in the way
 Of whome I shuldé merthé take,
 Me list nought longé for to wake
 But if it be for puré shame
 Of that I wolde escheue a name,
 That they ne shuld have causé none
 To say: ‘Ha, whéré goth such one
 That hath forlore his contaunce,’
 And thus among I singe and daunce
 And feigné lust thereas none is.
 For ofté sith I felé this,
 Of thought which in min herté
 falleth,
 Whan it is night min hede ap-
 palleth,²

And that is for I se her nought
 Whiche is the waker of my thought.
 And thus as timelich as I may
 Ful oft, whan it is brodé day,
 I take of all these other leve
 And go my way, and they beleve³
 That seen par cas her lovés there,
 And I go forth as nought ne were
 Unto my bed, so that alone
 I may there liggé, sigh and grone
 And wisschen all the longé night,
 Til that I see the daiés light.
 I not if that be Sompnolence,
 But upon youré consciéce,
 Min holy fader, demeth ye.”—

“My sone, I am well paid⁴ with
 the,

Of slepe that thou the sluggardy
 By night in lovés compaignie
 Eschuéd hast, and do thy pain
 So that thy lové dare nought pleine.
 But only slepé helpeth kind
 Somtime in phisique as I finde,

¹ *I you behete*, I promise you.

² *Appalleth*, becomes weak.

³ *Beleve*, remain.

⁴ *Paid*, pleased.

Whan it is take by mesure,
But he which can no slepe mesure
Upon the reule as it belongeth
Ful ofte of sodein chaunce he fongeth
Suche infortuné that him greveth.
But who these oldé bokés leveth
Of Sompnolence howe it is write,
There may a man the sothé wite,
If that he wolde ensample take,
That other while is good to wake;
Wherof a tale in poesy
I thenké for to specify.

“*Ovide telleth* in his sawes,
How Jupiter by oldé dawes
Lay by a maidé whiche Yo
Was clepéd, wherof that Juno.
His wife was wrothe and the god-
desse

Of Yo torneth the likenesse
Into a cow to gon there oute
The largé feldés all aboute
And gette her mete upon the grene.
And therupon this highé quene
Betoke her Argus for to kepe,
For he was selden wont to slepe;
And yet he had an hunderd eyen,
And all aliché wel they sighen.
Now herke how that he was be-
guiled.

Mercúry, which was all affiled¹
This cow to stele, he came disguised
And had a pipé wel devised
Upon the notés of musique,
Wherof he might his erés like.
And over that he had affaited
His lusty tales and awaited
His time. And thus into the felde
He came, where Argus he behelde
With Yo, which beside him went.
With that his pipe anon he hent
And gan to pipe in his manére
Thing which was slepy for to here.
And in his piping ever amonge
He tolde him such a lusty songe,

¹ *Affiled*, adapted.

That he the fool hath brought a slepe,
There was none eyé that might
kepe.

His hede, which Mercury of-smote.
And forth withall anone foot hote
He stale the cow whiche Argus
kepte,

And all this fel for that he slepte.
Ensamble it was to many mo,
That mochel slepe doth ofte wo
Whan it is timé for to wake.

For if a man this Vicé take
In Sompnolence and him delite,
Men shuld upon his doré write
His epitaphe and on his grave,
For he to spille and nought to save
Is shape as though he weré dede.

“Forthý my sone, hold up thin
hede

And let no slepe thin eye englué,
But whan it is to reson due.”—

“My fader, as touchénd of this
Right so as I you tolde it is,
That ofte abeddé whan I sholde
I may nought slepé though I wolde.
For Love is ever fasté by me,
Which taketh none hede of due timé,
For whan I shall min eyen close,
Anone min hert he woll oppose
And hold his scole in such a wise
Till it be day that I arise,
That selde it is whan that I slepe.
And thus fro Sompnolence I kepe
Min eye. And forthý if there be
Ought ellés more in this degre
Now axeth forth.”—“My soné, vis.
For Slouthé, whiche as moder is
The forth drawer and the noríce
To man of many a dredful Vice,
Hath yet another, last of alle,
Which many a man hath made to
falle

Where that he might never arise,
Wherof for thou thee shalt avise
Er thou so with thy self misfare,

What Vice it is I woll declare.

"**Whan Slouth** hath don all
that he may

To drivé forth the longé day,
Till it becómé to the nede,
Than atté last upon the dede
He loketh how his time is lore,
And is so wo begone therfore
That he within his thought conceiveth

Tristesse, and so him self deceiveth
That he Wanhopé¹ bringeth inne,
Where is no comfort to beginne.
But every joy him is deslaied,
So that within his-herte affraied
A thousand timé with one breth
Wepénd he wissheth after deth,
Whan he Fortúné fint adverse.
For than he woll his hope reherse,
As though his world were all forlore,
And saith, 'Alas, that I was bore,
How shall I live? how shall I do?
For now Fortune is thus my fo,
I wot well God me woll nought
helpe,

What shulde I than of joiés yelpé,²
Whan there no bote³ is of my care;
So overcast is my welfare,
That I am shapen all to strife;
Helas, that I nere of this life,
Er I be fullich overtake!

And thus he woll his sorwe make,
As God him mighté nought availe.
But yet ne woll he nought travaile
To helpe him self at suche a nede,
But sloutheth under suche a drede
Whiche is affermé in his herte
Right as he mighté nought asterte
The worldés wo which he is inne.
Also whan he is falle in sinne,
Him thenketh he is sofer coulpáble,
That god woll nought be merciáble
So great a sinné to foryive,

And thus he leveth to be shrive.
And if a man in thilké throwe
Wold him counseile, he wol nought
knowe

The sothé, though a man it finde.
For Tristesse is of suche a kinde,
That for to mainten his folý,
He hath with him obstinacy,
Which is within of suche a Slouth
That he forsaketh alle trouth
And woll unto no reson bowe.
And yet ne can he nought abowe¹
His owné skillé, but of hede
Thus dwine² he till he be dede,
In hindring of his owne estate.
For where a man is obstinate,
Wanhopé folweth atté laste,
Whiché may nought longe afterlaste
Till Slouthé make of him an ende.
But God wot whider he shall wende!

"My sone, and right in such
manere,

There be lovérs of hevy chere,
That sorwen moré than is nede,
Whan they be taried of her spede
And conné nought hem selven rede,
But lesen hopé for to spede
And stinten lové to pursue.
And thus they faden hide and hewe
And lustles in her hertés waxe.
Herof it is that I wolde axe,
If thou, mysone, arte one of tho?"—

"Ha, godé fader, it is so,
Outtake o point, I am beknowe,³
For ellés I am overthrowe
In all that ever ye have saide;
My sorwe is evermore unteide
And secheth over all my veines.
But for to counseile of my peines,
I can no boté do therto.

And thus withouten hope I go,
So that my wittés ben empeired
And I as who saith am dispeired

¹ Above, maintain.

² Dwineth, wastes, pines.

³ I confess, except as to one point.

¹ Wanhopé, despair.

² Dwineth, boast.

³ Boté, remedy.

To winné love of thi ké swete,
 Withouté whom, I you behete,
 Min herté that is so bestadde
 Right inly never may be gladde.
 For by my trouthe I shall nought lie
 Of puré sorwe whiche I drie¹
 Forthat she saith she will menought,
 With drecching² of min owné
 thought

In suche a Wanhope I am falle,
 That I ne can unnethés calle
 As for to speke of any grace
 My ladies mercy to purcháce.
 But yet I saíe nought for this
 That all in my default it is
 That I cam never yet in stede
 Whan timé was, that I my bede
 Ne saide and as I dorsté tolde.
 But never found I that she wolde
 For ought she knewe of min entent
 To speke a goodly worde assent.
 And nethéles this dare I say,
 That if a sinfull woldé prey
 To God of his foryívénesse
 With half so great a besinesse
 As I have do to my lady
 In lack of axing of mercý,
 He shuldé never come in helle.
 And thus I may you sothly telle,
 Sauf only that I crie and bidde,
 I am in Tristesse all amidde
 And fulfilled of desperaunce.
 And therof yef me my penaunce,
 Min holy fader, as you liketh."—

"My sone, of that thin herté siketh
 With sorwe might thou nought
 amende,

Till Love his gracé woll thee sende,
 For thou thin owné cause empciorest
 What time as thou thy self desperest.
 I not what other thinge availleth
 Of hopé whan the herté faileth,
 For suche a sore is incuráble,
 And eke the goddés ben vengeáble,

¹ Drie, endure.² Drecching, vexing.

And that a man may right well
 frede,¹

These oldé bokés who so rede
 Of thing which hath befallé er this,
 Now here, of what ensample it is.

Philon by oldé daiés fer
 Of Mesé was the king Theucer,
 Whiche had a knight to sone Iphis,
 Of love and he so mastred is,
 That he hath set all his coráge
 As to reward of his lignáge
 Upon a maide of lowe estate.
 But though he were a potestate
 Of worldés good, he was subgit
 To love and put in suche a plite
 That he exceedeth the mesúre
 Of reson, that him self assure
 He can nought. For the more he
 praid,

The lassé love on him she laid.
 He was with love unwise coun-
 streignéd,

And she with reson was restreignéd.
 The lustés of his herte he sueth,
 And she for dredé shame eschueteth,
 And as she shuldé, toke good hede
 To save and kepe her womanhede.
 And thus the thing stood in debate
 Betwene his lust and her estate,
 He yaf, he send, he spake by mouth,
 But yet for ought that ever he couth
 Unto his spede he found no wey,
 So that he cast his hope away.
 Within his hert he gan despire
 Fro day to day and so empenne
 That he hath lost all his delite
 Of lust, of slepe, of appetite,
 That he through strength of lové
 lasseth,

His wit and reson overpasseth
 As he whiche of his life ne rought.
 His deth upon him self he sought,
 So that by night his wey he nam,
 There wisté none where he becam.

¹ Frede, feel.² Rought, recked.

The night was derk, there shone
no mone,

To-fore the gatés he cam sone,
Where that this yongé maiden was,
And with this wofull worde, 'Helas,'
His dedly pleintés he began
So stillé that there was no man
It herde, and than he saidé thus :

'O thou Cupide, O thou Venús,
Fortúnéd by whose ordenaunce
Of love is every mannés chaunce,
Ye knowen all min holé hert,
That I ne may your hond astert,
On you is ever that I cric,
And you deigneth nought to plic
Ne toward me your ere encline.
Thus for I se no medicíne

To make an ende of my quarele,
My deth shall be in stede of hele.
Ha, thou my wofull lady dere,
Which dwellest with thy fader here
And slepest in thy bedde at ese,
Thou wost nothing of my disese,
How thou and I be now unmete.
Ha lord, what sweven shalt thou
mete?

What dremés hast thou now on
honde?

Thou slepest there, and I here
stonde,

Though I no deth to thee deserve.
Here shall I for thy lové sterve,
Here shall I a kings soné deie
For love and for no felony ;
Where thou therof have joy or sorwe,
Here shalt thou se me dede to
morwe.

O herté hard aboven alle,
This deth, which shall to me befallé,
For that thou wol nought do my
grace,

Yet shall be tolde in many a place ;
That I am dede for love and trouth
In thy defaulte and in thy slouth,
Thy daunger shall to many mo

Ensamplé be for evermo,
Whan they my wofull deth recorde.'
And with that worde he toke a corde
With which upon the gaté tre
He henge him self, that was pité.
The morwe cam, the night is gone,
Men comen out and sigh anone,
Wher that this yongé lord was dede.
There was an hous withouté rede,
For no man knewe the causé why,
There was wepingé, there was cry.
This maiden, whan that she it herde
And sigh this thing howe it mis-
ferde,

Anone she wisté what it ment,
And all the causé how it went
To all the world she tolde it out
And preith to hem that were about
To take of her the vengeaunce,
For she was cause of thilké chaunce
Why that this kingés sone is spilt,¹
She taketh upon her self the gilt
And is all redy to the peine
Whiche any man her wold ordeigne.
And but if any other wolde,
She saith, that she her selvé sholde
Do wicché with her owné honde,
Through out the worlde in every
londe

That every life² therof shall speke
How she her self it shuldé wreke.
She wepeth, she crieth, she swouncth
ofte,

She cast her eyen up alofte
And said among full pitously :
'O god, thou wost wel it am I,
For whom I phis is thus beseine,
Ordeigné so, that men may saine
A thousand winter after this,
How suche a maiden did amis,
And as I diddé do to me
For I ne diddé no pite
To him which for my love is lore,
Do no pité to me therfore.'

¹ *Spilt*, destroyed.

² *Life*, body.

And with this word she fell to
grounde

A swoune, and there she lay
astounde.

"The goddés, which her pleintés
herd

And sigh how wofully she ferd,
Her life they toke away anone
And shopen her into a stone
After the forme of her ymáge
Of body both and of visage.

And for the mervéile of this thing
Unto this placé came the king
And eke the quene and many mo,
And whan they wisten it was so,

As I have tolde it here above,
How that Iphis was dede for love
Of that he hadde be refused,
They helden allé men excused
And wondren upon the vengeaúnce.

And for to kepé remembraúnce
This faire ymagé maiden liche,
With compaignié noble and riche
With torche and great solemnité
To Salaminé the cité,

They lede and carie forth withall
This dede corps, and saine it shall
Besidé thilke ymáge have

His sepulture and be begrave.¹

This corps and this ymáge thus
Into the cité to Venús,

Where that goddesse her temple
had,

To-gider bothé two they lad.

This ilke ymáge as for mirácle
Was set upon an high pinácle
That allé men it mighté knowe,
And under that they maden lowe
A tombé riché for the nones

Of marbre and eke of jaspre stones,
Wherin that Iphis was beloken

That evermore it shall be spoken.

And for men shall the sothé wite

They have her epitaphé write

As thing which shulde abidé stable,
The letters graven in a table

Of marbre were and saiden this :

'Here lith, which sloughe him self,'

Iphis

For love of Araxarathen,
And in ensample of tho women
That suffren men to deié so,
Her forme a man may se also,
How it is tornéd flesshe and bone
Into the figure of a stone.

He was to neiss¹ and she to harde,
Beware forthý here afterwarde,
Ye men and women, bothé two,
Ensampléth you of that was tho.'

"Lo thus, my sonc, as I thee say
It greveth by diversé way

In Desespeire a man to falle,
Which is the lasté braunch of alle
Of Slouthc, as thou hast herd devise,
Wherof that thou thy self avise
Good is, er that thou be deceived
Wher that the grace of hope is
weived."—

"My fader, how so that it stonde,
Now have I plainly understonde
Of Slouthés Court the properté,
Wherof touchénd in my degre
For ever I thenké to beware.
But over this so as I dare
With all min hert I you beseche,
That yemewolde enforme and teche;
What there is more of your apprise
In Love als well as otherwise,
So that I may me clené shrive."—

My soné, while thou art alive
And hast also thy fullé minde,
Among the Vices, which I finde,
There is yet one such of the Seven
Which all this world hath set uneven
And causeth many thingés wronge
Where he the cause hath underfonge;
Wherof hereafter thou shalt here
The formé bothe and the matére.

¹ *Begrave*, buried.

¹ *Neiss*, delicate.

Book II.

OF AVARICE.

First whan the highé God began
This worlde and that the kind
of man

Was fall into no gret encess,
For worldés good was tho¹ no press
But all was set to the comune,
They speken than of no fortune
Or for to lese or for to winne,
Till Avaricé brought it inne.
And that was whan the world was
woxe •

Of man, of hors, of shepe, of oxe,
And that men knewen the monéy,
Tho wenté pees out of the wey
And werré came on every side,
Whiche allé lové laid aside
And of común his propré made,
So that in stede of shovel and spade
Thesharpésword wastake on honde.
And in this wise it cam to londe
Wherof men maden diches depe
And highé wallés for to kepe
The gold which Avarice encloseth.
But all to litel him supposeth,
Though he might all the world purcháse.

For what thing that he may embrace
Of golde, of catel or of londe,
He let it never out of his honde,
But get him more and halt it fast,
As though the world shuld ever last.

So is he lich unto the helle,
For as these olde bokés telle,
What cometh ther in lass or more
It shall departé nevermore.

Thus whan he hath his cofre loken,
It shall nought after ben unstoken¹
But whan him list to have a sight
Of gold, how that it shineth bright,
That he theron may loke and muse,
For otherwise he dare nought use
To take his part or lasse or more.

So is he pover, and evermore
Him lacketh that he hath enough.
An oxé draweth in the plough
Of that him self hath no proffte,
A shep right in the samé plite
His wolfe bereth, but on a day
An other taketh the flees away.
Thus hath he, that he nought ne
hath,

For he therof his part ne tath,²
To say how suche a man hath good
Who so that reson understood
It is unproperliché said;
That good hath him and halt him
taid³

That he ne gladdeth nought withall,
But is unto his good a thrall
And a subgit; thus serveth he
Where that he shulde maister be :

¹ *Tho*, then.

¹ *Unstoken*, unbarrelled. ² *Tath*, taketh.

³ *Taid*, tied.

Suche is the kinde of thavarous.

"My sone, as thou art amorous,
Tell if thou fare of Lové so."—

"My fader, as it semeth, no,
That avarous yet never I was,
So as ye setten me the cas.
For as ye tolden here above
In full possession of love
Yet was I never here to-fore,
So that me thenketh well therfore
I may excusé well my dede.
But of my will withouté drede
If I that tresor mighté gete
It shuldé never be foryete
That I ne wolde it fasté holde.
Till God of Love him selvé wolde
That deth us shuld departe atwo.
For leveth well, I love her so,
That even with min owné life,
If I that sweté lusty wife
Might onés welden at my wille.
For ever I wold holde her stille.
And in this wisé, taketh kepe,
If I her had I wolde her kepe;
And yet no friday wolde I fast,
Though I her kepte and heldé fast.
Fy on the baggés in the kist,
I had inough if I her kist.
For certés if she weré min,
I had her lever than a mine
Of gold, for all this worldes riche
Ne mighté maké me so riche
As she, that is so inly good
I setté nought of oþer good;
For might I getté such a thing,
I had a tresor for a king,
And though I wolde it fasté holde,
I weré thanné wel beholde.
But I might pipé now with lasse
And suffre that it overpasse,
Nought with my will, for thus I
wolde

Ben avarous if that I sholde.
But fader, I you herdé say,
How thavarous hath yet some way,

Wherof he may be glad. For he
May, whan him list, his tresor se
And grope and fele it all aboute.
But I full ofte am shet theroute,
There as my worthy tresor is,
So is my life lich unto this
That ye me tolden here to-fore,
How that an oxe his yoke hath bore
For thing that shulde him nought
availe;

And in this wise I me travaile.
For who that ever hath the welfare
I wot wel that I have the care,
For I am had and nought ne have
And am as who saith lovés knave.
Now demeth in your owné thought,
If this be avarice or nought."—

"My sone, I have of thee no
wonder,
Though thou to servé be put under
With Lové, which to kinde ac-
cordeth.

But so as every boke recordeth,
It is to findé no plesunce
That man above his sustenaunce
Unto the gold shall serve and bowe,
For that may no resón avowe.
But Avaricé nethéles,
If he may geten his encrés
Of gold, that wold he serve and
kepe,
For he taketh of nought elc's
kepe,

But for to fille his baggés large;
And all is to him but a charge,
For he ne parteth nought withall,
But kepeth it as a servaunt shall,
And thus though that he multiply
His goldé, without tresory
He is, for mán is nought amended
With gold but if it be despended
To mannés use, wherof I rede
A tale and take therof good hede
Of that befell by oldé tide,
As telleth us the clerke Ovide.

Bachus, which is the god of wine,
 Accordant unto his divine
 A prest the which Cillenus hight
 He had, and fell so, that by night
 This prest was drunke and goth
 astraied,
 Wherof the men were evil apaied
 In Phrigilond, where as he went.
 But atté last a cherle him hent
 With strength of other felaship,
 So that upon his drunkeship
 They bounden him with cheines
 faste
 And forth they lad him also faste
 Unto the king, which highté Mide.
 But he that wolde his Vicé hide
 This curteis king toke of him hede
 And bad, that men him shuldé lede
 Into a chambre for to kepe,
 Till he of leiser haddé slepe.
 And tho this prest was sone unbound
 And up a couché fro the ground
 To slepe he was laid soft inough.
 And whan he woke, the king him
 drough
 To his présence and did him chere,
 So that this prest in such manere
 While that him liketh ther he
 dwelleth,
 And al this he to Bachus telleth
 Whan that he cam to him aycin.
 And whan that Bachus heidé saun
 How Mide hath done his curtesy,
 Him thenketh, it were a vilany
 But he reward him for his dede,
 So as he might of his godhede.
 Unto this king this god appereth
 And clepeth, and that other hereth.
 This god to Midé thonketh faire
 Of that he was so debonaire
 Toward his prest, and bad him say
 What thinge it were he woldé pray
 He shulde it have, of worldés good.
 This king was glad and stillé stood

And was of his axinge in doubte
 And all the worlde he cast aboute,
 What thing was best for his estate.
 And with him self stood in debate
 Upon thre pointés, which I finde
 Ben levest unto mannés kinde.
 The first of hem it is delite,
 The two ben worship and profite.
 And than he thought, if that I crave
 Delite, though I delite may have,
 Delite shall passen in my age;
 That is no siker avauntage.
 For every joié bodely
 Shall ende in wo, delite forthý
 Woll Inoughtchese. And if worship
 I axe and of the world lordshíp,
 That is an occupation
 Of proude ymaginación,
 Which maketh an herté vein with-
 inne;
 There is no certain for to winne,
 For lorde and knave is all o wey
 Whan they be bore and whan they
 dece.
 And if I profite axé wolde,
 I not in what manér I sholde
 Of worldés good have sikernesce,
 For every thefe upon richesce
 Awaiteth for to robbe and stele.
 Such good is cause of harmés fele;
 And also though a man at ones
 Of all the world within his wonés¹
 The tresor might have every dele,
 Yet had he but one mannés dele
 Toward him self, so as I thinke,
 Of clothing and of mete and drinke,
 For more, out také vanité,
 There hath no lord in his degre.
 And thus upon these points
 diverse
 Diverselich he gan reherce,
 What point it thought him for the
 best.
 But plainly for to get him rest

¹ *H'ones*, dwellings.

He can no siker waie cast,
 And nethéles yet atté laste
 He fell upon the covetise
 Of gold, and than in sondry wise
 He thought, as I have said to-fore,
 How tresor may be soné lore,
 And hadde an inly great desir
 Touchénde of such recoverfr,
 How that he might his cause availe
 To gete him gold withouté faile.
 Within his hert and thus he preiseth
 The gold, and saith how that he
 peiseth

Above all other metal most.
 The gold, he saith, may lede an
 hoste

To maké weire ayein a king,
 The gold put under allé thing
 And set it whan him list above,
 The gold can make of haté love
 And werre of pees and right of wrong
 And long to short and short to long.
 Withouté gold may be no fest,
 Gold is the lord of man and best
 And may hem bothé beie and selle,
 So that a man may sothly telle
 That all the world to golde obcieth.

“Forthý this king to Bachus
 preieth

To graunt him gold, but he ex-
 cedeth

Mesuré moré than him nedeth.
 Men tellen, that the malady,
 Which clepéd is ydropesey
 Resembled is unto this Vice
 By way of kinde of Avarice.
 The more ydropesic drinketh,
 The more him thursteth, for him
 thinketh

That he may never drink his fille.
 So that there may no thing fulfille
 The lustés of his appetite,
 And right in such a maner plite
 Stant Avarice and ever stood ;
 The more he hath of worldés good,

The more he wolde it kepé streite
 And ever more and more coveite,
 And right in such condiciõ
 Withouté good discreciõ

This king with Avarice is smitte,
 That all the worlde it mighté witte,
 For he to Bachus thanné preide,
 That therupon his honde he leide,
 It shuldé through his touche anone
 Becomé gold ; and therupon
 This god him graunteth as he bad.
 Tho was this kinge of Phrigé glad.

And for to put it in assay
 With all the hasté that he may
 He toucheth that, he toucheth this,
 And in his hond all gold it is ;
 The stone, the tre, the leef, the gras,
 The flour, the fruit, all gold it was.
 Thus toucheth he while he may laste
 To go, but hunger atté laste
 Him toké so, that he must nede
 By wey of kinde his hunger fede.
 The cloth was laid, the bord was set
 And all was forth to-fore him set
 His dissh, his cup, his drink, his
 mete,

But whan he wolde or drinke or ete
 Anone as it his mouth cam nigh
 It was all gold, and than he sigh
 Of Avaricé the folie.

And he with that began to crie
 And preidé Bachus to foryive
 His gilt and suffre him for to live
 And be such as he was to-fore,
 So that he weré nought forlore.
 This god which herd of this gre-
 vaunce

Toke routhe upon his repentaunce
 And bad him go forth redély
 Unto a flood was fasté by,
 The which Pactolé thanné hight,
 In whiche als clene as ever he might
 He shuld him wasshen overall,
 And said him thanné that he shall
 Recover his first estate ayein.

This king right as he herdé sain
 Into the flood goth fro the lond
 And wissh him bothé fote and hond,
 And so forth all the remenaunt
 As him was set in covenauant.
 And than hesigh mervellés straunge,
 The flood his colourgan to chaunge,
 The gravel with the smalé stones
 To gold they torné both atones,
 And he was quite of that he hadde,
 And thus Fortúne his chauncé ladde.
 And whan he sigh his touch away,
 He goth him home the righté wey
 And liveth forth as he did er
 And put all Avarice afer
 And the richessé of gold despiseth
 And saith, that mete and cloth
 suffiseth.

Thus hath this king expérience,
 How foolés done the reverence
 To gold, which of his owné kinde
 Is lassé worth than is the rinde
 To sustenaunce of mannés food.
 And than he madé lawés good
 And all his tífing set upon skille,
 He bad his people for to tille
 Iler lond and live under the lawe,
 And that they shulde also forth drawe
 Bestaile and seché none encrees
 Of gold, whiche is the breche of pees.
 For this a man may findé write,
 To-fore the time, er gold was smite
 In coigne, that men the florein
 knewe,
 There was wel nigh no man untrewé.
 Tho was there nouthér shield ne
 spere
 Ne dedly wepen for to bere;
 Tho was the town withouten walle,
 Whiche nowé is closéd over alle;
 Tho was there no brocáge in lond,
 Which now taketh every cause on
 hond.

So may men knowe how the florein
 Was moder first of malengín

And bringer in of allé werre,
 Wherof this world stant out of herre,¹
 Through the counseil of Avarice,
 Whiche of his owné propré Vice
 Is as the hellé wonderful,
 For it may nevermore be full,
 That what as ever cometh therinne
 Away ne may it never winne.

“But soné min. dothounought so,
 Let all suche Avaricé go
 And take thy part of that thou hast.
 I biddé nought that thou do wast,
 But hold largesse in his mesúre.
 And if thou se a créature,
 Which through pouerte is falle in
 nede,

Yef him some good, for this I rede
 To him that wol nought yeven here
 What peín he shal have elles where.
 There is a peín amongés alle
 Benethe in hellé, which men calle
 The wofull peín of Tantalý,
 Of which I shall thee redely
 Devisé how men therin stonde.
 In hellé thou shalt understonde
 There is a flood of thilk office,
 Which serveth all for Avarice.
 What man that stondé shall therinne
 He stant up even to the chinne,
 Above his hede also there hongeth
 A fruit which to that peín longeth,
 And that fruit toucheth ever in one
 His overlippe, and therupon
 Such thirst and hunger him as-
 saileth,

That never his appetite ne failéth.
 But whan he wolde his hunger fede
 The fruit withdraweth him at nede,
 And though he heve his hede on high
 The fruit is ever aliché nigh,
 So is the hunger wel the more.
 And also though him thursté sore
 And to the water bowe adown,
 The flood in such condiciön

¹ Unhinged

Avalet¹, that his drinke arecche
He may nought. Lo now, whiche
a wreche,
That mete and drinke is him so couth
And yet ther cometh none in his
mouth !

Lich to the peiné of this flood
Stant Avarice in worldés good,
He hath inough and yet him nedeth,
For his scarcentesse it him forbedeth
And ever his hunger after more
Travaileth him aliché sore,
So is he peiné overall.
Forthy thy goodés forth withal,
My soné, loké thou despende,
Wherof thou might thy self anende
Both here and eke in other place.
And also if thou wolt purchace
To be belovéd, thou must use
Largesse, for if thou refuse
To yivé for thy lovés sake,
It is no reson that thou take
Of lové that thou woldest crave.
Forthy if thou wolt gracé have,
Be graciouís and do largesse,
Of Avarice and ² the sikenesse
Escheue above all other thinge,
And take ensample of Midethe kinge
And of the flood of helle also,
Where is inough of allé wo.
And though there weré no matére
But onely that we finden here,
Men oughten Avarice eschue ;
For what man thiéké Vicé sue,
He gete him self but litel rest.
For how so that the body rest,
The hert upon the gold travaileth,
Whom many a nightés drede as-
saileth.

For though he ligge a bedd naked,
His herte is evermore awaked
And dremeth as he lith to slepe

How besy that he is to kepe
His tresor, that no thefe it stele ;
Thus hath he but a wofull wele.
And right so in the samé wise,
If thou thy self wolt wel avise,
There be lovés of suche inow,
That wollen unto reson bowe
If so be that they come above,
Whan they ben maisters of her love
And that they shulden be most glad
With lové, they ben most bestad,
So fain they wolden holde it all.
Her herte, her eye is overall,
And wenen every man be thefe
To stele away that hem is lefe ;
Thus through her owné fantasy
They fallen into jelousy.
Than hath the ship to-brok his cable
With every winde and is mev-
able." ¹—

"My fader, for that ye now telle,
I have herd oftetímé telle
Of Jelousy, but what it is
Yet understode I never er this.
Wherfore I woldé yóu beseche,
That yemewolde enforme and teche
What maner thing it mighté be."—
"My soné, that is hard to me,
But nethéles as I have herd
Now herke, and thou shalt be
answerd.

Among the men lack of manhode
In mariáge upon wif-hode
Maketh that a man him self de-
ceiveth,
Wherof it is that he conceiveth
That ilke unsely malady,
The whiche is cleped Jelousy,
Of whiche if I the propreté
Shall telle after the nicété
So as it worceth on a man,—
A fever it is cotidian,
Whiche every day wol come aboute
Where so a man be in or oute,

¹ And is to be moved by every wind.

¹ *Avalet*, goes lower.

² *Of Avarice and, &c.* ; And *Escheue, &c.*
See note, page 61. This construction is fre-
quent throughout the poem.

At home if that a man wol wone
This fever is than of comun wone¹
Most grevous in a mannés eye,
For than he maketh him tote and
pry;

Where so as ever his lové go,
She shall nought with her litel toe
Misteppé, but he se it all,
His eye is walkend overall,
Where that she singe or that she
daunce,

He seeth the lesté countenance;
If she loke on a man aside
Or with him rowne at any tide,
Or that she laugh or that she loure,
His eye is there at every houre.

And whan it draweth to the night,
If she than be withouté light,
Anone is all the gamé shent,
For than he set his parlement
To speke it whan he cometh to bed
And saith: 'If I were now to wed,
I wolde never more have wife.'

And so he torneth into strife
The lust of lovés ducté
And al upon diversité.

If she be freshe and well arraied,
He saith her banner is desplaied
To clepe in gastes by the way;
And if she be nought wel besey²
And that her list nought to be glad,
He bereth on honde that she is
mad

And loveth nought her husébonde;
He saith, he may wel understonde,
That if she wolde his compaignie,
She shuldé than afore his eye
Shew all the plesure that she might.
So that by daie ne by night
She not what thing is for the best,
But liveth out of allé rest.

For what as ever him list to sain,
She dare nought speke o worde
ayein,

But wepeth and holt her lippés
close.

She may wel writé, 'Sans repose.'
The wife, which is to such one
married,

Of allé women be he waried,¹
For with his fever of jelousy
His eché daiés fantasý
Of sorwe is ever aliché grene,
So that there is no lové sene
While that him list at home abide.
And whan so is he woll out ride,
Than hath he redy his aspy
Abiding in her compaigny
A jangler, an ill mouthéd one,
That she ne may no whider gone
Ne speke o word, ne onés loke,
But he ne wol it wende and croke
And torne after his owne entent,
Though she no thing but honour
ment.

Whan that the lord cometh home
ayein

The jangler musté somewhat sain.
So what withoute and what withinne
This fever is ever to beginne,
For where he cometh he can nought
ende

Til deth of him hath made an ende.
For though so be that he ne here,
Ne se, ne witc, in no manere
But all honoure and womanhede,
Therof the jelous taketh none hede,
But as a man to Love unkinde
He cast his stafe and as the blinde
And fint defaulté where is none;
As who so dremeth on a stone
How he is laid, and groneth ofie
Whan he lieth on his pilwes softe.
So is there nought but strife and
chest,

Whan Lové shuldé make his fest.
I wot the time is ofté cursed,
That ever was the gold unpursed,

¹ *Wone*, custom.

² *Besey*, clothed

¹ *Waried*, cursed

The which was laid upon the boke,
 Whan that all other she forsoke
 For love of him, but all to late
 She pleigneth, for as than algate
 She mot forbere and to him bowe,
 Though he ne woldé that allowe;
 For man is lord of thilké faire,
 So may the woman but empeire
 If she speke ought ayein his wille,
 And thus she bereth her peine stille.
 But if this fever a woman take
 She shall be wel more hardé shake,
 For though she bothé se and here
 And finde that there is no matere,
 She dare but to her selvé pleigne,
 And thus she suffreth double peine.

"Lo thus, my sone, as I have
 write,
 Thou might of jelousié wite
 His fever and his condicion,
 Which is full of suspiciön.
 But wherof that this fever groweth,
 Who so these oldé bokés troweth,
 There may he findé how it is.
 For they us teche and tellé this,
 How that this fever of jelousy
 Somdele it groweth of sotý¹
 Of love and somdele of untrust.
 For as a sikman lest his lust,²
 And whan he may no savour gete
 He hateth than his owné mete,
 Right so this feverous malady,
 Which causéd is of fantasý,
 Maketh the jeloús in feble plite
 To lese of love his appetite
 Through feigné enformaciön
 Of his ymaginacion.
 But finally to taken hede
 Men may wel make a liklyhede
 Betwene him whiche is avaroués
 Of golde and him that is jeloús
 Of lové, for in o degre
 They stondé both, as semeth me ;

¹ *Sotý (sottise)*, folly.

² *Loses* his enjoyment.

That one wold have his baggés still
 And nought departen¹ with his will
 Anddare nought for the thevé's slepe
 So faine he wolde his tresor kepe ;
 That other may nought well be glad,
 For he is evermore adrad
 Of these lovér's that gone aboute,
 In aunter if they put him oute.
 So have they bothé litel joy
 As wel of love as of money.

"Now hast thou, sone, of my
 teching
 Of jelousy a knouleching,
 That thou might understandé this,
 Fro whenne he cometh and what
 he is,

And eke to whom that he is like.
 Beware forthý thou be not sike
 Of thilké fever, as I have spoke,
 For it woll in him self be wroke.
 For Lové hateth no thing more,
 As men may findé by the lore
 Of hem that whilom weré wise,
 How that they speke in many
 wise."

"My fader, soth is that ye sain ;
 But for to loké there ayein
 Before this timé how it is falle,
 Wherof there might ensample falle
 To suché men as ben jeloús
 In what manér it is grevoués,
 Right fain I wolde ensample
 here."

"My godé sone, at thy praiere
 Of suche ensamples as I finde,
 So as they comen now to minde
 Upon this point of timé gone,
 I thenké for to tellen one.

Ovide wrote of many thinges,
 Among the whiche in his writings
 He told a tale in poesy,
 Which toucheth unto jelousy
 Upon a certain cas of Love.
 Among the goddés al above

¹ *Departen*, distribute.

It felle at thilké timé thus.
 The god of fire, which Vulcanus
 Is hote and hath a craft forth with
 Assigned for to be the smith
 Of Jupiter, and his figure
 Both of viságe and of statúre
 Is lothly and malgracious ;
 But yet he hath within his hous
 As for the liking of his life
 The fairé Venus to his wife.
 But Mars, which of bataillés is
 The god, an eye had unto this,
 As he which was chivalerous.
 It felle him to ben amorous,
 And thought it was a great pité
 To se so lusty one as she
 Be coupled with so lour¹ a wight,
 So that his peiné day and night
 He did, if he her winne might.
 And she that had a good insight
 Toward so noble a knightly lord
 In lové fel of his accord.
 There lacketh nought but time and
 place,
 That he nis sicker of her grace.
 But whan two hertés fallen in one,
 So wise a wait² was never none
 That at sometimé they ne mcte ;
 And thus this fairé lusty swete
 With Mars hath ofté compaigny.
 But thilke unkindé jealousy,
 Which evermore the herte opposeth,
 Maketh Vulcanús that he supposeth
 That it is nought wel overall ;
 And to him self he said, he shall
 Aspié better, if that he may.
 And so it felle upon a day,
 That he this thing so sleightly ledde,
 He founde hem bothé two abedde.
 With stronge cheinés he hem
 bounde,
 As he to-gider hem had founde,
 And lefté hem both liggé so
 And gan to clepe and crié tho

¹ *Lourd*, dull, heavy. ² *Wait*, watch.

Unto the goddés all aboute.
 And they assembled in a route
 Come all at onés for to se,
 But none amendés haddé he,
 But was rebukéd here and there
 Of hem that lovés frendés were,
 And saiden that he was to blame,
 For if there felle him any shame
 It was through his misgovernance,
 And thus he losté contenance
 This god and let his causé falle,
 And they to scorne him laughen alle.
 Forthý my sone, in thine office
 Beware, that thou be nought jelous,
 Whiche ofté time hath shent the
 hous.”—

“My fader, this ensample is hard,
 How such thing to the hevenward
 Among the goddés mighté falle.
 For there is but o god of alle,
 Which is the lord of heven and helle.
 But if it líké you to telle
 How suché goddés come aplace,
 Ye mighten mochel thank purchase,
 For I shall be wel taught with-
 all.”—

“My sone, it is thus overall
 With hem, that stonden misbelevéd,
 That suché goddés ben beleved
 In sondry placé sondry wise.
 Amongés hem which be unwise,
 There is betaken of credence,
 Wherof that I the difference
 In the manér as it is write
 Shall do thee plainly for to wite.

“**Er Crist was bore** among us
 here
 Of the belevés that tho were,
 In fouré formés thus it was.
 They of Caldee as in this cas
 Had a belevé by hem selve,
 Which stood upon the signés twelve,
 Forth eke with the planetés seven,
 Whiche as they sighen upon the
 heven

Of sondry constellaci3n
 In her ymaginaci3n
 With sondry kerfe and portreture
 They made of goddés the figúre.
 In thelementes and eke also
 They hadden a belevé tho.
 And all was that unresonáble,
 For thelementes ben servisáble
 To man. And ofte of accidence,
 As men may se thexperience,
 They ben corrupt by sondry way,
 So may no mannés reson say
 That they ben god in any wise.
 And eke if men hem wel avise,
 The sonne and mone eclipsen both,
 That be hem lesf or be hem loth
 They suffre, and what thing is passíble¹

To ben a god is impossíble.
 These elements ben creatúres,
 So ben these heavenly figúres,
 Wherof may wel be justified,
 That they may nought ben deified.
 And who that taketh away thonour,
 Which due is to the créatoúr,
 And yiveth it to the créatúre,
 He doth to great a forfeiture.
 But of Caldée nethéles
 Upon this feith though it be lesse
 They holde afferméed the creaunce,
 So that of hellé the penaunce,
 As folk which stant out of beleve,
 They shall receive, as we beleve.

"Of the Caldees so in this wise
 Stant the beleve out of assise,
 But in Egipté worst of alle
 The feith is fals, how so it falle,
 For they diversé bestés there
 Honoúr, as though they goddes were.
 And nethélesse yet forth withall
 Thre goddés most in speccall
 They havé forth with a goddesse,
 In whome is all her sikernesse.
 Tho goddés be yet clepéd thus

¹ *Passible*, capable of offering.

Orus, Tiphon and Isirus. "
 They weré brethren allé thre
 And the goddesse in her degre
 Her suster was and Ysis hight,
 Whom Isirus forlay by night
 And helde her after as his wife.
 So it befell, that upon strife
 Tiphon hath Isre his brother slain,
 Which had a child to sone, Orain,
 And he his faders deth to herte
 So toke, that it may nought asterte
 That he Tiphón after ne slough,
 Whan he was ripe of age inough.
 But yet thegipcienés trowe
 For all this errour, which they knowe,
 That thesé brethern ben of might
 To sette and kepe Egípt upright
 And overthrowe if that hem like.
 But Ysis, as saith the cronique,
 Fro Grece into Egipté cam
 And she than upon hondé nam
 To teche hem for to sowe and cre,
 Which no man knew to-foré there.
 And whanné thegipcienés sigh
 The feldés full afore her eye,
 And that the lond began to greine,
 Which whilom haddé be bareine,
 For thethé bare after the kinde
 His dué chargé, this I finde,
 That she of berthé the goddesse
 Is clepéd, so that in distresse
 The women therupon childing
 To her they clepe and her offring
 They beren whan that they ben light.
 Lo, howe Egipt all out of sight
 Fro reson stant in misbeleve,
 For lacke of lore as I beleve.

"Among the Grekes out of the wey
 As they that reson put away
 There was, as the croniqué saith,
 Of misbeleve an other feith,
 That they her goddés and goddeses
 As who saith token all to gesses
 Of suche as weren full of vice,
 To whom they madé sacrifice.

"The Highé God, so as they
saide,
To whom they mosté worship laide,
Saturnus hight, and king of Crète
He haddé be. But of his sete
He was put down as he which stood
In frenésy and was so wode ¹
That fro his wife, which Rea hight,
His owné children he to plight ²
And ete hem of his comune wone.³
But Jupiter, which was his sone
And of full age, his fader bonde
And kut of with his owné honde
His genitals, whiche also faste
Into the depé see he caste,
Wherof the Grekes afferme and say
That, whan they weré cast away
Came Venus forth by wey of kinde.
And of Saturne also I finde,
Howe afterwarde into an ile
This Jupiter him didde exile,
Where that he stood in great mis-
chêfe.

Lo, what a god they maden chéfe !
And sithen that suché one was he
Which stood most high in his degre
Among the goddés, thou might know
These other that ben moré low
Ben litel worth, as it is founde.

"For Jupiter was the secoúnde,
Whiche Juno had unto his wife.
And yet a lechour all his life
He was and in avouterie ⁴
He wroughté many a trecherie.
And for he was so full of vices,
They clepéd him God of Delices,
Of whom if thou wolt moré wite
Ovidé the poète hath writé.
But yet her sterrés bothé two
Saturne and Jupiter also
They have, although they ben to
blame,

Attitid to her owné name.

"Mars was an other in that lawe,
Thewhich in Dacé was forth drawe,
Of whom the clerk Vegecius
Wrote in his boke and toldé thus,
Howe he into Itailé came
And such fortuné there he nam,
That he a maiden hath oppressed,
Whiche in her ordre was professed
As she which was the prioressé
In Vestés temple the goddesse,
So was she well the more to blame.
Dame Ylia this ladye name
Men clepe, and eke she was also
The kingés doughter, that was tho,
Which Minitor by namé hight.
So that ayein the lawés right
Mars thilké time upon her that
Remús and Romulus begat,
Whiche after, whan they come in
age,

Of knighthode and of vassellage
Itaile al hole they overcome
And foundeden the greté Rome.
In armés and of suche emprise
They weren, that in thilké wise
Her fader Mars for the merveile
The God is clepéd of Bataile.
They were his children bothé two,
Through hem he toke his namé so,
There was none other causé why.
And yet a sterre upon the sky
He hath unto his name applied,
In which that he is signified.

"An other god they hadden eke,
To whom for counseil they besêke,
The which was brother to Venús,
Apollo men him clepé thus.
He was an hunte upon the hilles,
There was with him no vertue elles
Wherof that any bokés carpe,
But only that he couthé harpe,
Which whan he walkéd over londe
Full ofté time he toke on honde
To get him with his sustenaúnce
For lack of other purveaúnce.

¹ Wode, mad. ² To plight, plucked to pieces.

³ Of his comune wone, as his usual custom.

⁴ Avouterie, adultery.

And otherwhile of his falshede
 He feigneth him to conne arede
 Of thing which afterward shuld falle,
 Wherof among his sleightés alle
 He hath the leudé¹ folk deceived,
 So that the better he was received.
 Lo now, through what creaciön
 He hath deificaciön
 And clepéd is the God of Wit,
 To suche as be the foolés yet.

“An other god, to whom they
 sought,
 Mercúrie hight, and him ne rought
 What thing he stale, ne whom he
 clough.

Of sorcery he couthe inough,
 That whan he wold him self trans-
 forme.

Full ofté time he toke the forme
 Of woman and his owné leste.
 So did he well the moré thefte.
 A great spekér in allé thinges
 He was also and of lesinges
 An autor, that men wisté none
 An other suche as he was one.
 And yet they maden of this thefe
 A god which was unto hem lefe,
 And clepéd him in tho beleves
 The God of Marchants and of
 Theves.

But yet a sterre upon the heven
 He hath of the planetés seven.

But Vulcanus, of whom I spake,
 He had a courbe² upon the back,
 And therto he was hippe-halt,
 Of whom thou understandé shalt,
 He was a shrewe in al his youth
 And he none other vertue couth
 Of craft to helpe him selvé with
 But only that he was a smith
 With Jupiter, whiche in his forge
 Diversé thingés made him forge;
 So wote I nought for what desire
 They clepen him the God of Fire.

¹ *Leudé*, unlearned. ² *Courbe*, hump.

King of Cicile Ypolitus
 A sone he had, and Eolus
 He hight, and of his faders graunt
 He held by way of coveaunt
 The governaunce of every ile
 Which was longénd unto Cicile,
 Of hem that fro the lond forein
 Lay ope the windés alle pleine.¹
 And fro thilke iles into the londe
 Full ofté cam the wind to honde;
 After the name of him forthý
 The windés clepéd Eoly
 They were, and he the God of Winde.
 Lo now, how this beleve is blinde.

The king of Creté Jupiter,
 The samé, whiché I spake of er,
 Unto his brother, which Neptune
 Was hote, it list him to comune
 Parte of his good, so that by ship
 He made him stronge of the lordship
 Of all the see in tho parties,
 Where that he wrought his tiran-
 nies,

And the straunge ilés aboute
 He wan, that every man hath double
 Upon his marché² for to saile.
 For he anone hem wolde assaile
 And robbé what thing that they
 ladden,

Hissauf conduit but if³ they hadden.
 Wherof the comun vois aros
 In every lond, that suche a los.
 He caught, all nere it worth a stre,
 That he was cleped of the See
 The God by name, and yet he is
 With hem that so beleve amis.
 This Neptune eke was thilke also,
 Which was the firsté founder tho
 Of noble Troy, and he forthý
 Was well the moré letté by.

The lorésman of the shephérdes
 And eke of hem that ben nethérdes,
 Was of Archade and highté Pan,

¹ Laid up a full store of all the winds.

² *Marché*, borders.

³ *But if*, unless.

Of whom hath spoké many a man,
For in the wode of Nonartigne
Encloséd with the trees of pigne
And on the mount of Parasie
He had of bestés the bailie,¹
And eke beneth in the valéy,
Where thilké river, as men maysay,
Which Ladon highté, made his
cours,

He was the chefe of governours
Of hem that kepten tamé bestes,
Wherof they maken yet the festes
In the citee of Stimfalides.
And forth withall yet nethéles
He taughté men thê forth drawing
Of bestaile and eke the making
Of oxen and of hors the same,
How men hemshuldéride and tame,
Of foulés eke, so as we finde,
Full many a subtil craft of kinde
He found, which no man knew to-
fore.

Men did him worship eke therfore,
That he the first in thilké londe
Was, which the melodië fonde
Of reedés whan they weren ripe,
With double pipés for to pipe.
Therof he yaf the firsté lóre,
Till afterward men couthé more;
To every crafte of mannés helpe
He had a redy wit to helpe
Through natural expérience.
And thus thurh nicé reverence
Of foolés, whan that he was dede,
The foot was tornéd to the hede
And clepen him God of Nature,
For so they maken his figüre.

"An other god, so as they fele,
Whiche Jupiter upon Semele
Begot in his avouterie,
Whom, for to hide his lecherie
That none therof shall také kepe,
In a mountaigné for to kepe
Which Dion hight and was in Ynde

¹ *Bailie*, custody.

He send, in bokés as I finde,
And he by namé Bachus hight,
Which afterward, whan that he
might,

A waster was and all his rent
In wine and bordel¹ he despent.
But yet all were he wonder bad
Among the Grekes a name he had,
They clepéd him the God of Wine
And thus a gloton was divine.

"There was yet Esculapius
A god in thilké time as thus.
His craft stood upon surgerie,
But for the luste of lecherie,
That he to Dairés daughter drough,
It tell that Jupiter him slough,
And yet they made him nought
forthy

A god, and wist no causé why.
In Rome he was long timé so
A god among the Romains tho,
For as they saide of his preséncé
There was destruiéd a pestiléncé
Whan they to thile of Delphos went;
And that Apollo with him sent
This Esculapiús his sone
Among the Romains for to wone;
And there he dwelté for a while,
Till afterwarde into that ile
Fro when he cam ayeine he torneth,
Where all his life that he sojórneþ
Among the Grekes till that he
deiede.

And they upon him thanné leide
His name, and God of Medicíne
He hatte after that ilké line.

"An other god of Hercules
They madé, which was nethéles
A man, but that he was so stronge
In al this world that brode and longe
So mighty was no man as he.
Merveilés twelve in his degre,
As it was couth in sondry londes,
He didé with his owné hondes

¹ *Bordel*, revelry.

Ayein geaúnts and monstres both,
The whiche horrible were and loth.
But he with strength hem overcam,
Wherof so great a price he nam,
That they him clepe amongés alle
The God of Strengthe and to him
calle.

And yet there is no reson inne,
For he a man was full of sinne,
Which provéd was upon his ende,
For in a rage him self he brende.
And suche a cruell mannés dede
Accordeth nothing with godhede.

They had of goddés yet an other,
Which Pluto hight, and was the
brother

Of Jupiter, and he fro youth
With every word which cam to
mouth,

Of any thing, whan he was wroth,
He woldé swere his comun othe
By Lethen and by Flegeton,
By Cochitum and Acheron,

The whiche after the bokés telle
Ben the chefe floodés of the helle :
By Segne and Stige he swore also,
That ben the depé pittés two
Of hellé the most principall.

Pluto these othés over all
Swore of his comun custumaúnce,
Till it befelle upon a chaunce,
That he for Jupiter's sake
Unto the goddés let do make
A sacrifice, and for that dede
One of the pittés for his mede
In hell of whiche I spake of er
Was graunted him, and thus he
there

Upon the fortune of this thinge
The namé toke of Hellé Kinge.

"Lo, thesé goddés and well mo
Among the Grekés they had tho,
And of goddés many one,
Whose namés thou shalthereanone,
And in what wisé they deceiven

The foolés, whiche her feith receive.

"So as Saturne is soveraine
Of falsé goddés, as they saine,
So is Cybeles of goddés
The moder, whom withouté gesses
The folké prein, hondúr, and serve
As they the whiche her lawe observe.

But for to knowen upon this,
Fro when she cam and what she is,
Bethincia the contré hight,
Whereshe cam first to mannés sight.

And after was Saturné's wife,
By whom thre children in her life
She bare, and they were clepéd tho
Juno, Neptunus and Pluto,

The which of nicé fantasý
The people woldé deify.

And for her children weren so
Cybelés thanné was also
Made a goddesse, and they her calle
The Moder of the Goddés alle.
So was that namé boré forth,
And yet the cause is litel wouth.

A vois unto Saturné tolde,
How that his owné some him sholde
Out of his regné put away,
And he because of thilké wey
That him was shapé suche a fate,
Cybele his wife began to hate
And eke her progenië bothe.
And thus while that they weré wrothe
By Philerein upon a day
In his avouterie he lay,
On whom he Jupiter begat.
And thilké child was after that
Which wrought al that was pro-
phecied,

As it tofore is specified.

So whan that Jupiter of Crete
Was king, a wife unto him mete
The daughter of Cybele he toke,
And that was Juno, saith the boke
Of his deflcatiön

After the fals opiniön
That I have tolde, so as they mene.

And for this Juno was the quene
Of Jupiter and suster eke,
The foolés unto hiré seke
And sain, that she is the Goddesse
Of Regnés bothe and of Richesse,
And eke she, as they understonde,
The water nimphés hath in honde
To leden at her owné heste.
And whan her list the sky tempéste
The reinbowe is her messagere,
Lo, which a misbeleve is here
That she goddésse is of the sky,
I wot none other causé why.

“An other goddesse is Minerve,
To whom the Grekes obey and
serve.

And she was nigh the greaté lay¹
Of Triton foundé, where she lay
A child for-cast, but what she was
There knew no man the sothé cas.
But in Aufriqué she was laide
In the manér as I have saide
And caried fro that ilké place
Into an ilé fér in Trace,
The which Pallené thanné hight,
Where a noíce hir kepte and dight.
And after for she was so wise,
That she found first in her avise
The cloth making of woll and linc,
Men saiden that she was divine,
And the Goddesse of Sapience
They clepen her in that credence.

Of the goddésé, which Pallas
Is clepéd, sondry speché was.
One saith her fader was Pallaunt,
Whiche was in his time a geaunt,
A cruell man, a batailous.
An other saith, how in his hous
She was the causé why he deiede.
And of this Pallas some eke saide
That she was Martés wife, and so
Among the men that weren tho
Of misbeleve in the riot
The Goddesse of Batailés hote

¹ Lay, lake.

She was, and yet she bercth the
name.

Now loke, how they be for to blame.

“Saturnus after his exile
Fro Creté cam in great perile
Into the londés of Itaile
And there he didé great merveile,
Wherof his namé dwelleth yit.
For he founde of his owné wit
The firsté crafte of plough tilling,
Of ering¹ and of corn sowing,
And how men shulden setté vines
And of the grapés make wines;
All this he taught. And it fell so
His wife, the which cam with him tho,
Was clepéd Cereres by name,
And for she taught also the same
And was his wife that ilké throwe,
As it was to the people knowe,
They made of Ceres a goddesse,
In whom her tilthé yet they blesse
And sain that Tricolonius
Her soné goth amongés us
And maketh the corn good chepe
or deie,

Right as her list, from yere to yere,
So that this wife because of this
Godde-se of Cornés cleped is.

“King Jupiter, which his líking
Whilom fulfilled in allé thing,
So priveliche about he ladde
His lust, that he his willé hadde
Of Latoná and on her that
Diane his daughter he begat
Unknownen of his wife Juno.
But afterward she knewe it so,
That Latoná for dredé fled
Into an ilé, where she hid
Her wombé which of childe aros.
Thilke ilé clepéd was Delos,
In which Diana was forth brought
And kept so that her lacketh nought.
And after whan she was of age,
She toke none hede of mariáge,

¹ Ering, ploughing.

But out of mannés compaigny
 She toke her all to venery¹
 In forest and in wilderness,
 For there was all her businesse
 By day and eke by nightés tide
 With arwés brode under the side
 And bow in honde, of which she
 slough

And toke all that her list inough
 Of bestés which ben chaceable.
 Wherof the cronique of this fable
 "Saith that the gentils most of alle
 Worshippen her, and to her calle
 And the Goddesse of highé Hilles,
 Of grené trees, of fressshé welles
 They clepen her in that beleve,
 Which that no reson may acheue.

"Prosérpina, which doughter was
 Of Cereres, befell this cas :
 While she was dwelling in Cicile,
 Her moder in that ilké while
 Upon her blessing and her hest
 Bad that she shuldé ben honést
 And lerné for to weve and spinne
 And dwell at home and kepe her
 inne.

But she cast all that lore away,
 And as she went her out to play
 To gader flourés in a pleine,
 And that was under the mountaigne
 Of Ethna, fell the samé tide
 That Pluto cam that waié ride.
 And sokeilyn, er she was ware,
 He toke her up into his chare,²
 And as they riden in the felde,
 Her greté beauté he behelde,
 Which was so plesaunt in his eye,
 That for to holde in compaignie
 He wedded her, and helde her so
 To ben his wife for evermo.
 And as thou hast to-fore herde telle,
 How he was clepéd God of Helle,
 So is she clepéd the Goddesse
 Because of him, ne more ne lesse.

¹ *Venery*, hunting. ² *Charr*, car, chariot.

"Lo thus, my sone, as I the tolde,
 The Grekes whilóm by daiés olde
 Her goddés had in sondry wise,
 And through the lore of her apprise¹
 The Romans helden eke the same
 And in the worshippe of her name
 To every god in speciáll
 They made a temple forth withall
 And eche of hem his yerés day
 Attitled hadde. And of array
 The temples weren than ordeigned,
 And eke the people was con-
 streigned

To come and done her sacrifice.
 The prestés eke in her office
 Solempné maden thilké festes.
 And thus the Grekés lich to bestes
 The men in stede of God honour,
 Which mighten nought hem self
 soccour

While that they were alivé here.

"And over this as thoushalt here
 The Grekes fulfilled of fantasy
 Sain eke that of the hilles high
 The goddés ben in speciall,
 But of her name in generall
 They hoten allé Satiry.

"There ben of Nimphés proprely
 In the beleve of hem also :
 Oréadés they saiden tho
 Attitled ben to the montaignes ;
 And for the wodés in demeines ;
 To kepé tho ben Driadés ;
 Of fressshé wellés Naiadés ;
 And of the nimphés of the sec
 I finde a tale in proprete,
 How Dorus whilom king of Grece,
 Whiche had of infortune a piece,
 His wife forth with his doughter alle
 So as the happés shulden falle
 With many a gentilwoman there
 Dreint in the salté see they were,
 Wherof the Grekés that time saiden
 And such a name upon hem laiden,

¹ *Apprise*, teaching.

Nereides that they ben hote,
 The nymphés whiché that they note
 To regne upon the stremés salte.
 Lo now, if this belevé halte.
 But of the nymphés as they telle,
 In every placé where they dwelle
 They ben all redy obeisaunt
 As damisellés attendaunt
 To the goddésés, whose servise
 They mote obey in allé wisc,
 Wherof the Grekes to hem beseke
 With tho that ben goddesses eke,
 And have in hem a great credénce.
 And yet without experience
 Saufe onely of illusion,
 Which was to hem dampnación.

“For men also that weré dede
 They hadden goddés as I rede,
 And tho by namé Manes highten,
 To whom ful great honour they
 dighen,

So as the Grekés lawé saith,
 Which was ayein the righté feith.

“Thus have I tolde a great partie,
 But all the holé progenie
 Of goddés in that ilké time
 To longe it weré for to rime.
 But yet of that which thou hast herde
 Of misbeleve, howe it hath ferde,
 There is a great diversité.”—

“My fader, right so thenketh me.
 But yet o thinge I you beseche,
 Which stant in allé mennés speche,
 The God and the Goddess of Love,
 Of whom ye nothing here above
 Have told, ne spoken of her fare,
 That ye me woldé now declare,
 How they first comé to that name.”—

“My sone, I have it left for shame,
 Because I am her owné prest.
 But for they stondé nigh thy brest
 Upon the shrifte of thy matere,
 Thou shalt of hem the sothé here,
 And understand now well the cas.
 Venus Saturnés doughter was,

Which allé Daunger put away
 Of Love and found to lust a wey,
 So that of her in sondry place
 Diversé men fell into grace,
 And such a lusty life she ladde,
 That she diversé children hadde,
 Now one by this, now one by that.
 Of her it was that Mars begat
 A child which clepéd was Armiene,
 Of her cam also Andragene,
 To whom Mercúrie father was.
 Anchises begat Eneás
 Of her also, and Ericon
 Biten begatte, and therupon
 Whan that she sigh ther was none
 other

By Jupiter her owné brother
 She lay, and he begat Cupide.
 And thilké sone upon a tide,
 Whan he was come unto his age,
 He had a wonder fair viságe
 And founde his mother amorous,
 And he was also lecherous.
 So whan they weren bothe alone,
 As he whiche eyen haddé none
 To se reson, his mother kist,
 And she also that nothing wist
 But that whiche to his lust be-
 longeth,

To bene her love him underfongeth.
 Thus was he blinde and she unwis.
 But nethéles this cause it is
 Which Cupide is the god of love,
 For he his mother derste love,
 And she, which through her lustes
 fonde

Diversé lovés toke on honde
 Wel mo than I the tellé here.
 And for she wolde her selvé skere,¹
 She madé comun that disporte
 And set a lawe of such a porte
 That every woman mighté take
 What man her list and nought
 forsake

¹ *Skere*, clear, free.

To ben as comun as she wolde.
 She was the first also which tolde
 That women shulde her body selle.
 Semiramis so as men telle
 Of Venus kepte thilke apprise.
 And so did in the samé wise
 Of Romé fairé Neabólie,
 Which lift her body to Rególie.
 She was to every man felawe
 And held the lust of thilke lawe
 Which Venus of her self beganne,
 Wherof that she the namé wanne
 Why men her clepen the Goddesse
 Of Love and eke of gentillesse,
 Of worldés lust and of plesaunce.

"Se now the foulé miscreaunce
 Of Grekes in thilke timé tho,
 Whan Venus toke her namé so.
 There was no cause under the mone
 Of which they hadden tho to done
 Of wel or wo where so it was,
 That they ne token in that cas
 A god to helpe or a goddesse,
 Wherof to také my witenesse,
 "The king of Bragman Dindimus
 Wrote unto Alisaundre thus
 In blaminge of the Grekés feith
 And of the misbeleve he saith
 How they for every membre hadden
 A sondry god, to whom they
 spradden

Her armés and of help besoughten.

"Minervé for the hede they
 soughten,
 For she was wise, and of a man
 The wit and reson which he can
 Is in the cellés of the brain,
 Wherof they made her sovereign.

"Mercúrie, which was in his
 dawes
 A great spekér of falsé lawes,
 On him the keeping of the tunge
 They laidén, whan they speke or
 sunge.

"For Bachus was a gloten eke

Him for the throté they besেকে,
 That he it woldé wasshen ofte
 With suoté drinkés and with softe.

The god of shulders and of armes
 Was Hercules, for he in armes
 The mightiesté was to fight,
 To him tho limmés they behight.
 The god whom that they clepen Mart
 The brest to kepe hath for his part,
 For with the herte in his ymage
 That he addresse to his corage.
 And of the gallé the goddesse,
 For she was ful of hastinesse,
 Of wrath and light to greve also,
 They made and said, it was Juno.

"Cupidé, which the brond of fire
 Bare in his hond, he was the sire
 Of the stomáck, which boileth ever,
 Wherof the lustés ben the lever.

"Thus was dispers in sondry
 wise
 The misbeleve as I devise
 With many an ymage of entaile¹
 Of suche as might hem nought
 availle.

For they withouté livés chere
 Unmighty ben to se or here
 Or speke or do or ellés fele,
 And yet the foolés to hem knele
 Whiche is her owné handés werke.
 Ha lord, how this beleve is derke
 And fer fro resonable wit,
 And nethéles they don it yit.
 That was o day a ragged tre
 To morwe upon his magesté
 Stant in the temple wel besein;
 How might a mannés reson sain,
 That such a stock may helpe or
 greve?

But they that beh of such beleve
 And unto suché goddés calle,
 It shall to hem right so befallé
 And failen atté mosté nede.
 But if thee list to taken hede

¹ Graven image.

And of the first ymáge wite,
 Petronius therof hath write
 And eke Nigargorus also,
 And they afferme and writé so,
 That Promethéüs was to-fore
 And foundé the first craft therfore,
 And Cirophánes, as they telle,
 Through counseil which was take
 in helle,

In remembraunce of his lignage
 Let setten up the first ymáge.
 Of Cirophánes saith the boke
 That he for sorwe which he toke
 Of that he sigh his soné dede,
 Of comfort knew none other rede
 But let do make in remembraunce
 A faire ymáge of his semblaunce
 And set it in the market place,
 Which openly to-fore his face
 Stood every day to done him ese.
 And they that thanné wolde plesce
 The fader, shulden it obey.¹
 Whan that they comen thilké wey.

“And of Ninús king of Assire
 I redé, how that in his empire
 He was, next after, the secoúnd
 Of hem that first ymáges found.
 For he right in sembláble cas
 Of Belus, which his fader was
 Fro Nembroth in the righté line,
 Let make of gold and stonés fine
 A precíous ymáge riche
 After his fader evenliche,
 And therupon a law he sette
 That every man of puré dette
 With sacrifice and with truáge
 Honóuré shuldé thilk ymáge.
 So that withinné time it selle
 Of Belus cam the name of Belle,
 Of Bel cam Belzebub and so
 The misbelevé wenté tho.

“The thrid ymáge next to this
 Was whan the king of Grece, Apis,
 Was dede, they maden a figúre

¹ Make obeisance to.

In resembraunce of his statúre.
 Of this king Apis saith the boke,
 That Serapis his namé toke,
 In whom through long continuaunce
 Of misbeleve a great creaunce
 They hadden and the reverence
 Of sacrifice and of encence
 To him they made. And as they
 telle

Among the wonders that befelle,
 Whan Alisaundre fro Candace
 Cam ridend in a wildé place
 Under an hille a cave he fond,
 And Candalus, whiche in that lond
 Was bore and was Candaces sone,
 Him told, how that of comun wone
 The goddés were in thilké cave.
 And he that wolde assay and have
 A knouelching if it be soth,
 Light of his hors and in he goth
 And fond therinné that he sought.
 For through the fendés sleight him
 thought

Amongés other goddés mo
 That Sérapis spake to him tho,
 Whom he sigh there in great array.
 And thus the fend fro day to day
 The worship of ydolatrie
 Drough forth upon the fantasie
 Of hem that weren thanné blinde
 And couthen nought the trouthe
 finde.

Thus hast thou herd in what degre
 Of Grece, and Egipte and Caldec
 The misbelevé's whilom stood,
 And how so that they be nought
 good

Ne trewé, yet they sprongen oute,
 Wherof the widé worlde aboute
 His parte of misbelevé toke.
 Til so befelle, as saith the boke,
 That God a people for him selve
 Hath chose of the lignáges twelve,
 Wherof the sothé redely,
 As it is write in Genesy,

I thenké telle in suche a wise,
That it shall be to thin apprise.

“After the flood, fro which Noë
Was sauf, the worlde in his degré
Was made as who saith new ayein
Of flour, of fruit, of gras, of grein,
Of beest, of brid and of mankinde,
Whiche ever hath be to God unkinde.
For nought withstonding all the fare
Of that this world was made so bare,
And afterward it was restored,
Among the men was nothing mored¹
Towardés God of good living,
But all was tornéd to líking
After the flessch, so that foryete
Was he which yaf hem life and mete,
Of heven and erthé créatoúr.
And thus cam forth the great errour,
That they the highé God ne knewe,
But maden other goddés newe,
As thou hast herd me said to-fore.
There was no man that timé bore,
That he ne had after his chois
A god to whom he yaf his vois,
Wherof the misbelevé cam
Into the time of Abraham.
But he found out the righté wey,
Howe only men shulden obey
The highé God, which weldeth all
And ever hath done and ever shall
In heven, in erth and eke in helle,
There is no tunge his might may telle.
This patriarch to his lignáge
Forbad that they to none ymáge
Enclíné sholden in no wise,
But her offrende and sacrificé
With all the holé hertés love
Unto the mighty God above
They shuldé yive and to no mo.
And thus in thilké timé tho
Began that sect upon this erthe,
Whiche of belevés was the ferthe.
Of right wisnesse it was conceived,
So must it nedés be received

¹ *Mored*, increased.

Of him that alle right is inne,
The highé God, which woldé winne
A people unto his owné feith.
On Abraham the ground he laith
And made him for to multiply
Into so great a progeny,
That they Egipte all over spradde.
But Tharaö with wrong hem ladde
In servitude ayein the pees,
Til God let sendé Moïses
To maké the deliveraunce.
And for his people great vengeaunce
He toke, which is to here a wonder.
The king was slain, the lond put
under,
God bad the Reddé See devide,
Which stood upright on every side
And yaf unto his people a wey
That they on foot it passéd drey
And gone so forth into desért,
Where for to kepe hem in covert
The daiés whan the sonné brent
A largé cloude hem over went,
And for to wissen hem by night
A firy pillar hem alight.
And whan that they for hunger
pleigne,
The mighty God began to reïne
Manna fro heven down to groundé,
Wherof that ech of hem hath founde
His foodé such right as him list.
And for they shuld upon him trist
Right as who set a tonne abroche
He percedé the hardé roche
And spronge out water all at wille,
That man and beste hath dronk his
fille.
And afterward he yaf the lawe
To Moïses, that hem withdrawe
They shuldé nought fro that he bad.
And in this wisé they be lad,
Til they toke in possession
The londés of promission,
Where that Caleph and Josué
The marches upon such degre

Departen¹ after the lignage
That eche of hem as heritage
His purparty² hath underfonge.
And thus stood this belevé longe,
Whiche of prophétés was govérned,
And they had eke the people lérned
Of great honour that shuld hem
falle,

But atté mosté nede of alle
They faileden, whan Crist was bore.
But how that they her feith have lore
It nedeth nought to tellen all,
The matere is so generall.

"Whan Lucifer was best in heven
And oughté most have stonde in
even,

Towardes God he toke debate,
And for that he was obstinate
And woldé nought to trouth encline
He fel for ever into rufne.

"And Adam eke in Paradis,
Whan he stood most in all his pris
After the state of innocence,
Ayein the God brake his defence"
And fell out of his place away.
And right by such a maner wey
The Jewés in her besté plite,
Whan that they sholden most parfite
Have stonde upon the prophecý,
Tho fellen they to most folý
And him which was fro heven come
And of a maid his flessch hath nome
And was among hem bore and fed,
As men that wolden nought be sped
Of Goddés Soné, with o vois
They heng and slough upon the
crois,

Wherof the parfite of her lawe
Fro thenné forth hem was with-
drawe,

So that they stonde of no mérit,
But in a truage⁴ as folk subgít

¹ *Departen*, divide. ² *Purparty*, share.

³ *His defence*, his prohibition (that which was "defendu").

⁴ *Truage*, homage.

Withouté propreté of place
They liven oute of Goddés grace,
Dispers in allé londés oute.
And thus the feith is come aboute,
That whilome in the Jewés stood,
Whiche is nought parfítlích good.
To speke as it is now befallé
There is a feith aboven alle,
In which the trouthe is compre-
hended,

Wherof that we ben all amended.

"The high almighty magesté
Of rightwisnesse and of pité
The sinné which that Adam wrought,
Whan he sigh time, ayein he bought
And send His Sone fro the heven
To setté mannés soule in even,
Which thanné was so soré fall
Upon the point which was befall
That he ne might him self arise.

"Gregoíre saith in his apprise:
It helpeth nought a man be bore,
If Goddés Soné were unbore,
For thanné through the firsté sinne,
Which Adam whilom brought us
inne,
There shulden allé men be lost ;
But Crist restoreth thilké lost
And bought it with his flesshe and
blood.

And if we thenken how it stood
Of thilké raunson which he paid,
As saint Gregoíre it wrote and said,
All was behovely to the man.
For that wherof his wo began
Was after cause of all his welth,
Whan he which is the welle of
helth,

The highé creatour of life,
Upon the nede of such a strife
So wolde he for his créature
Take on him self the forfeitúre
And suffre for the mannés sake.
Thus may no reson wel forsake¹

¹ *Forsake*, deny.

That ilké sinne original
 Ne was the cause in specciall
 Of mannés worship atté last
 Which shall withouten endé last.
 For by that causé the godhede
 Assembled was to the manhede
 In the Virginé, where he nome
 Our flesshe and verray man become
 Of bodély fraternité,
 Wherof the man in his degré
 Stant moré worth, as I have told,
 Than he stood erst by many fold,
 Through baptisme of the newélawe,
 Of which Crist lord is and feláwe.
 And thus the Highé Goddé's might,
 Which was in the VírGINE alight,
 The mannés soule has reconciled,
 Which haddé longé ben exiled.
 So stant the feith upon beleve
 Withouté which may non acheve.
 But this beleve is so certain
 To biggé¹ mannés soule ayein,
 So full of grace and of vertu,
 That what man clepeth² to Jesú
 In clené life forth with goode dede,
 He may nought faile of Heven mede
 Which taken hath the righté feith.
 For ellés, as the gospel saith,
 Salvacióne there may be none.
 And for to preché therupon
 Crist bad to his apostles alle,
 The whos powér as now is falle
 On us that ben of holy chirche,
 If we the godé dedés werche;
 For feith onlý sufficeth nought
 But if good dede also be wrought.

"Now were it good, that thou
 forthy,

Which through baptismé proprely
 Art unto Cristés feith professed,
 Beware that thou be nought op-
 pressed

With anticristés Lollardie.
 For as the Jewés prophecie

Was set of God for avauntage,
 Right so this newé tapinage¹
 Of Lollardié goth aboute
 To setté Cristés feith in doubté,
 The saints that weren us to-fore,
 By whom the feith was first up bore
 That holy chirché stood releved,
 They oughen better be beleved
 Than thesé whiché that men knowe
 Nought holy, though they feigne
 and blowe

Her Lollardy in mennés ere.
 But if thou wolt live out of fere
 Such newé lore I rede escheue,
 And hold forth right the wey and sue
 As thin auncéstrés did er this,
 So shalt thou nought beleve amis.
 Crist wroughté first and after taught
 So that the dede his word aught,
 He yaf ensample in his persóné
 And we tho wordés have alone,
 Like to the tree with levés grene
 Upon the which no fruit is sene.

"The prest Thoas, which of
 Minerve

The temple haddé for to serve
 And the Palladion of Troy
 Kept under keié, for monaie
 Of Anthenor whiche he hath nome
 Hath suffred Anthenor to come
 And the Palladion to stele,
 Wherof the worship and the wele
 Of the Troiáns was overthrowe.
 But Thoas atté samé throwe,
 Whan Anthenor this jeuele toke,
 Winkendé cast away his loke
 For a deceipté and for a wile,
 As he that shuld him self beguile
 He hid his eyen fro the sight
 And wendé wel that he so might
 Excuse his falsé conscience.
 I wot nought if thilke evidence
 Now at this time in her estates
 Excusé mighté the prelates,

¹ *Bigge*, buy. ² Whatever man calls.

¹ *Tapinage*, secret skulking.

Knowend how that the feith dis-
ceseth

And allé morál vertu ceseth
Wherof that they the keiés bere.
But yet hem liketh nought to stere
Her gostlich eyé for to se
The worlde in his adversité;
They wol no laboure undertake
To kepé that hem is betake.¹
Crist deidé him self for the feith,
But now our ferful prelate saith;
'The life is swete,' and that he
kepeth

So that the feith unholpé slepeth,
And they unto her esc entenden
And in her lust her life despenden,
And every man doth what him list.
Thus stant this world fulfilled of
mist,

That no man seeth the righté wey.
The wardés of the chirché key
Through mishandlingé ben mis-
wreint,²

The worldés wawe³ hath welnigh
dreint

The ship which Peter hath to stere,
The forme is kept, but the matére
Transforméd is in other wise.
But if they weren gostly wise
And that the prelats weren good,
As they by oldé daiés stood,
It weré thanné litel nede

Among the men to taken hede
Of that they heren Pseudo⁴ telle,
Which now is comé for to dwelle
To sowé cockel with the corn
So that the tilthe is nigh forlorn,
Which Crist sew first his owné hond.
Now stant the cockel in the lond,
Where stood whilom the godé
greine,

For the prelats now, as men sain,

Forslouthen¹ that they sholden tille.
And that I trowé be the skille²
Whan there is lacke in hem above,
The people is straungéd to the love
Of trouth in cause of ignorance.
For where there is no purveance
Of light, men erren in the derke.
But if the prelats wolden werke
Upon the feith which they us teche,
Men sholden nought her waié seche
Withouté light as now is used;
Men se the charge all day refused
Whiche holy chirche hath under-
take.

But who that wolde ensample
take,

Gregoire upon his Omelie
Ayein the Slouth of Prelacie
Compleigneth him and thus he saith:
'Whan Peter, fader of the feith,
At domésday shall with him bring
Judeam, which through his preching
He wan, and Andrew with Achay
Shall come his detté for to pay,
And Thomas eke with his beyete
Of Ynde, and Paul the routés grete
Of sondry londés to present,
And we fulfilled of londe and rent
Whiche of this worlde we holden
here,

With voidé hondés shall appere,
Touchend our curé spirituall
Whiche is our charge in speciall,
I not what thing it may amounte
Upon thilke ende of our accompte
Where Crist him self is auditour,
Which taketh none hede of vein
honour.

Thoffice of the chauncellerie
Or of the kingés tresorie
Ne for ne write ne for ne taile³
To warrant may nought than availe.

¹ *Betake*, entrusted.

² *Miswreint*, wrenched out of shape.

³ *Wawe*, wave.

⁴ *Pseudo*, false.

¹ *Forslouthen*, waste by their slouth.

² *Skille*, reason.

³ *Taile*, tally, used for checking of accounts

The world which now so wel we trow
 Shall make us thanné but a mowe,
 So passé we withouté mede,
 That we none otherwisé spede
 But as we redé that he spedde,
 Thewhiche his lordés besant¹ hadde
 And therupon gat none encres.
 But at his timé nethéles
 What other man his thank deserve
 The world so lusty is to serve
 That we with him ben all accorded,
 And that is wist and well recorded
 Throughout thiserthe in allé londés;
 Let knightés winné with her hondés,
 For ouré tungé shall be still
 And starde upon the flesshés will;
 It were a travail for to preche
 The feith of Crist, as for to teche
 The folké painim; it woll nought be:
 But every prelate holde his see
 With allé such as he may gete
 Of lusty drinke and lusty mete,
 Wherof the body fat and full
 Is unto gostly labour dull
 And slough to handle thilké plough.
 But ellés we ben swifte inough
 Toward the worldés Avarice.
 And that is as a sacrifice,
 Which after that thapostle saith
 Is openly ayein the feith
 Unto the ydols yove and graunted,
 But nethéles as it is now haunted
 And vertue chaungéd into vice,
 So that Largesse is Avarice,
 In whose chapitre now we trete.”—

“My fader, this matere is bete
 So far, that ever while I live
 I shall the better hedé yive
 Unto my self by many wey.
 But over this now wolde I prey
 To wité, what the braunches are
 Of Avarice, and how they fare
 Als well in love as otherwise.”—

“My sone, and I the shall devise

¹ *Besant*, a gold coin of Byzantium; talent.

In suche a maner as they stonde,
 Sothat thou shalt hemunderstonde.

“**Dame Avarice** is nought so-
 leine,¹

Which is of gold the capiteine.
 But of her Courte in sondry wise
 After the scole of her apprise
 She hath of servaunts many one,
 Wherof that Covetise is one,
 Which goth the largé worlde about
 To seché thavauntáges out
 Where that he may the profit winne
 To Avarice and bringeth it inne.
 That one halt and that other draweth,
 There is no day which hem be-
 daweth.”²

No more the sonné than the mone,
 Whan there is any thing to done,
 And namély with Covetise,
 For he stant out of all assise
 Of resonáble mannes fare
 Where he purpóséth him to fare
 Upon his lucre and his beyete.
 The smallé path, the largé strete,
 The furlonge and the longé mile,
 All is but one for thilké while.
 And for that he is such one holde,
 Dame Avarice him hath witholde,³
 As he which is the principall
 Outward,⁴ for he is over all
 A purveioúr and an espy.
 For right as of an hungry py
 The storvé bestés ben awaited,⁵
 Right so is Covetise affaited
 To loké where he may purchase,⁶
 For by his will he wolde embrace
 All that this widé world beclippeth.
 But ever he somewhat overhippeth⁶
 That he ne may nought all fulfille
 The lustés of his gredy wifflé.
 But where it falleth in a londe,

¹ *Soleine*, single.

² *Bedawith*, awakes.

³ *Witholdic*, held with.

⁴ *Outward*, watcher outside.

⁵ *Purchase*, get booty.

⁶ *Overhippeth*, hops over.

That Covetise in mighty honde
Is set, it is full hard to fede.
For than he taketh none other hede
But that he may purcháde and gete,
His consciéce hath all foryete
And nought what thing it may
amounte

That he shall afterwarde accompte.
But as the luce ¹ in his degre
Of tho that lassé ben than he
The fisshes gredily devoureth,
So that no water hem soccoureth,
Right so no lawé may rescowe
Fro him that woll no right allowe,
For where that such one is of might,
His will shall stonde in stede of right.
Thus be the men destruiéd full ofte,
Till that the greté God alofte
Ayein so great a Covetise
Redresse it in his owné wise.
And in ensample of allé tho
I finde a talé writé so,
The which for it is good to lere
Herafterward thou shalt it here.

“**Whan Rome stood** in noble
plite,

Virgilé, which was tho parfite,
A Mirroure made of his clergie ²
And sette it in the townés eye
Of marbre on a pillér without,
That they by thritty mile about
By day and eke also by night
In that Mirroure beholdé might
Her ennemies, if any were,
With all her ordenauncé there
Which they ayein the citee cast.
So that while thilké Mirroure last,
There was no lond which might
acheve

With werré Romé for to greve,
Wherof was great envié tho.
And fell that ilké timé so,
That Romé haddé werrés stronge
Ayein Cartáge, and stoden longe

¹ Luce, pike.

² By his learning.

The two citees upon debate.
Cartagé sigh the strong estate
Of Rome in thilké mirroure stonde,
And thought all prively to fonde
To overthrowe it by some wile.
And Hanibal was thilké while
The prince and leader of Cartáge,
Which haddé set all his coráge
Upon knighthode in such a wise
That he by worthy and by wise
And by none other was counseiled,
Wherof the world is yet merveiled
Of the maistriés that he wrought,
Upon the marches which he sought,
And fell in thilké time also,
The kinge of Puilé, which was tho,
Thought ayein Romé to rebelle,
And thus was také the quarelle,
How to destruie the Mirroure.
Of Romé tho was emperour
Crassus, which was so covetous,
That he was ever desirous,
Of gold to geté the pilage,
Wherof that Puile and eke Cartage
With philosóphres wise and great
Beginne of this matere to treat.
And atté last in this degre
There weren philosóphres thre
To do this thing whiche undertoke;
And therupon they with hem toke
A great tresúre of gold in cofres
To Rome, and thus these philo-
sóphres
To-gider in compaignie went,
But no man wisté what they ment.
Whan they to Romé comé were,
So prively they dwelté there
As they that thoughten to deceive;
Was none that might of hem per-
ceive
Till they in sondry stedés have
Her gold under the erth begrave
In two tresórs that to beholde
They sholden seme as they were
olde.

And so forth than upon a day
 All openly in good array
 To themperour they hem present
 And tolden it was her entent
 To dwellen under his servise ;
 And he hem axeth in what wise.
 And they him told in such a plite¹
 That eche of hem had a spirite
 The which slepénd aught appereth
 And hem by sondry dremés leweth
 After the world that hath betid,
 Under the grounde if ought be hid
 Of old tresór at any throwe,
 They shall it in her swevenes²
 knowe.

And upon this condition
 Theysain, what gold under the town
 Of Rome is hid, they woll it finde,
 There shuldé nought beleft behinde
 Be so that he the halvé dele
 Hem graunt, and he assenteth wele.
 And thus cam Sleighté for to dwelle
 With Covetise as I the telle.
 This emperour had redély,
 That they be logéd faste by,
 Where he his owné body lay.
 And whan it was at morwe day,
 That one of hem saith that he mette³
 Where he a gold hord shuldé fette,
 Wherof this emperour was glad.
 And therupon anone he bad
 His minours for to go and mine,
 And he him self of that covine
 Goth forth withall, and at his honde
 The tresor redy there he fonde
 Where as they said it shuldé be.
 And who was thanné glad but he ?

“ Upon that other day secounde
 They have another gold hord founde,
 Which the secondé maister toke
 Upon his sweven and undertoke.
 And thus the soth experieñce
 To themperour yaf such credénce,

That all his trust and all his feith
 So sikerliche on hem he laith
 Of that he found him so releved,¹
 That they ben partly belevéd,
 As though they weré goddés thre.
 Now herkeneth the subtilite
 The thriddé maister shuldé mete,
 Whiche as theysaiiden was unmete²
 Above hem all, and couthé most,
 And he withouté noise or host
 All privelich, so as he wolde,
 Upon the morwe his swevenes tolde
 To themperour right in his ere
 And said him, that he wiste where
 A tresor was so plenteóus
 Of golde and eke so precioús
 Of jeuellés and of rich stones,
 That unto all his hors at ones
 It were a chargé suffisaunt.
 This lord upon this covenaut
 Was glad and axeth where it was :
 The maister said, under the glas.
 He tolde him eke as for the mine
 He wolde ordeigné such engine,
 That they the werk shulde under-
 sette

With timber, and withouté lette
 Men may the tresor sauflý delve,
 So that the Mirroure by him selve
 Without empeirément shal stonde.
 All this the maister upon honde
 Hath undertake in allé wey.
 This lord, whiche had his wit away
 And was with Covetisé blent,
 Anone therto yaf his assent.
 And thus they miné forth withall,
 The timber set up over all,
 Wherof the pillar stood upright ;
 Till it befell upon a night
 These clerkés, whan they weré ware
 How that the timber only bare
 The pillar where the Mirroure
 stood,—

¹ *Plite*, promise. ² *Swevenes*, dreams.
³ *Mette*, dreamed

¹ *Releved*, enriched, as by reliefs and fines.
² *Unmete*, immeasurably.

Her sleighté no man understood,—
 They go by night unto the mine
 With pitch, with sulphre and rosine,
 And whan the citee was aslepe,
 A wildé fire into the depe
 They cast among the timber werke,
 And so forth while the night was
 derke

Desguiséd in a pouer array
 They passeden the towne er day.
 And whan they come upon an hille,
 They sighen how the Mirroure felle,
 Wherof they madé joy inough,
 And eche of hem with other lough
 And saiden, 'Lo, what Covetise
 May do with hem that be nought
 wise !'

And that was provéd afterwarde,
 For every lond to Romé warde,
 Whiche haddé be subgit to-fore,
 Whan this Mirroure was so forelore
 And they the wonder herdé say,
 Anone begunné disobey
 With werrés upon every side.
 And thus hath Romé lost his pride
 And was defouléd over all.
 For this I finde of Hanibal,
 That he of Romans in a day
 Whan he hem found out of array,
 So great a multitudé slough,
 That of gold ringes which he drough
 Of gentil hondés that ben dede
 Busshellés fullé thre I rede
 He filled, and made a brigge also
 That he might over Tiber go
 Upon the corps that dedé were
 Of the Romans whiche he slough
 there.

"But now to speke of the juise,
 The which after the Covetise
 Was take upon this emperour,
 For he destruíed the Mirroure,
 It is a wonder for to here.
 The Romans maden a chaire
 And set her emperour therinne

And saiden, for he woldé winne
 Of gold the superfluité,
 Of golde he shuldé such plenté
 Receivé till he saidé 'ho,'
 And with gold which they haddé tho
 Boilendé hot within a panne,
 Into his mouth they pouré thanne.
 And thus the thirst of gold was
 queint

With gold whiche haddé ben atteint.
 "Wherof, my soné, thou might
 here,

Whan Covetise hath lost the stere
 Of resonáble governaunce,
 There falleth ofté great grevaunce.
 For there may be no worsé thing
 Than Covetise about a king.

If it in his personé be
 It doth the more adversité ;
 And if it in his counseil stonde
 It bringeth all day mischéfe to
 honde

Of comun harme ; and if it growe
 Within his court, it woll be knowe,
 For thanné shall the king be pilled.¹
 The man, whiche hath his londé
 tilled,

Awaiteth nought more redély
 The hervest, than they gredily
 Nemaken thanné warde and wacche
 Where they the profit mighten
 cacche.

And yet full oft it falleth so,
 As men may sene among hem tho,
 That he which most coveiteth fast
 Hath leest avauntage atté last.
 For whan fortune is there ayein,
 Though he covcite it is in veine,
 The happés ben nought allé liche.
 One is made pouer, an other riche,
 The court to some it doth profite,
 And some ben ever in o plite.
 And yet they both aliché sore
 Coveité, but fortune is more

¹ Pilled, fleeced.

Unto that o part favouráble ;
 And though it be nought resonáble,
 This thing a man may sene al day,
 Wherof that I the tellé may
 After ensample in remembraunce,
 How every man may take his
 chaunce

Or of richesse or of pouerte,
 How so it stonde of the deserte.
 Here is nought every thing acquit,
 For oft a man may se this yit
 That who best doth lest thank shal
 have ;

It helpeth nought, the world to
 crave,

Whiche out of reule and of mesure
 Hath ever stonde in aventure
 Als well in court as ellés where ;
 And how in oldé daiés there
 It stood so as the thingés felle,
 I thanke a talé for to telle.

“ *In a croniqué* this I rede :
 About a kinge as it must nede
 There was of knightés and squiérs
 Great route and eke of officérs.
 Some of long time him haddén served
 And thoughten that they have de-
 served

Avauncément and gone withoute ;
 And some also ben of the route
 That comen but a while agone,
 And they avauncéd were anone.
 These oldé men upon this thing
 So as they durst ayein the king
 Among hem self compleignen ofte.
 But there is nothing said so softe,
 That it ne cometh out at last.
 The king it wist anone als fast
 As he which was of high prudence.
 He shope therfore an evidence
 Of hem that pleighen in that cas,
 To knowe in whose default it was.
 And all within his owne entent,
 That no man wisté what it ment
 Anone he let two cofres make

Of one semblaunce and of o make,
 So lich that no life thilké throwe¹
 That one may fro that other knowe.
 They were into his chambre
 brought,

But no man wot why they be
 wrought.

And nethéles the king hath bede,
 That they be set in privé stede,
 As he that was of wisdom sligh.
 Whan he therto his timé sigh
 All privelich, that none it wist,
 His owné hondés that o kist
 Of fine golde and of fine perrie,
 The which out of his tresorie
 Was take, anone he fildé full,
 That other cofre of strawe and mull²
 With stonés meind he fildé also.
 Thus be they fullé bothé two.

So that erliche upon a day
 He bad withinné where he lay
 There shuldé be to-fore his bedde
 A borde up set and fairé spredde.
 And than he let the cofres fet,
 Upon the borde and did hem set.³
 He knew the namés well of tho,
 The whiche ayein him grucché so
 Both of his chambre and of his
 halle,

Anone and sendé for hem alle
 And saidé to hem in this wise :

‘ There shall no man his *map*
 despise ;

I wot well ye have longé served,
 And God wot what ye have de-
 served.

But if it is along on me
 Of that ye unavauncéd be
 Or ellés it belonge on you,
 The sothé shall be proved now
 To stoppé with your evil worde.
 Lo here two cofres on the borde,

¹ Nobody at that time.

² *Mull*, dirt, rubbish.

³ And caused them to be set upon the board.

Chese whiche you list of bothé two
 And witeth well, that one of tho
 Is with tresór so full begon
 That if ye happé therupon
 Ye shál be riché men for ever.
 Now chese and take whiche you is
 lever.

But be well ware, er that ye take,
 For of that one I undertake
 There is no maner good therinne
 Whereof ye mighten profit winne.
 Now goth to-gider of one assent
 And taketh your advisément,
 For but I you this day avaunce
 It stant upon your owné chaunce :
 All only in default of grace
 So shall be shewed in this place
 Upon you allé well and fine,
 That no defaulté shall be mine.'

• "They knelen all and with one
 vois

The king they thonken of this choís.
 And after that they up arise
 And gon aside and hem avise
 And atté lasté they accorde,
 Wherof her talé to recorde
 To what issué they be falle
 A knight shall speké for hem alle.
 He kneleth down unto the king
 And saith, that they upon this thing
 Or for to winne or for to lese
 Ben all aviséd for to chese.

"Tho toke this knight a yerd on
 hond

And goth there as the cofres stond
 And with thassent of everychone
 He laith his yerde upon one
 And saith the king how thilké same
 They chese in reguerdón by name,
 And preith him that they might it
 have.

The king, which wold his honour
 save,

When he hath herd the comun vois
 Hath graunted hem her owné choís

And toke hem therupon the key.
 But for he wolde it weré say
 What good they have as they sup-
 pose,
 He bad anone the cofre uncloze,—
 Which was fulfilled with straw and
 stones,

Thus be they servéd all at ones.
 This king than in the samé stede
 Anone that other cofre undede,
 Where as they sighen great richesse
 Wel moré than they couthen gesse.
 'Lo,' saith the king, 'now may ye se,
 That there is no defaulte in me,
 Forthý my self I woll acquite
 And bereth ye your owné wite ¹
 Of that fortune hath you refused.'
 Thus was this wisé king excused,
 And they leste of her evil speche
 And mercy of her king beseche.

"**Somdele** to this materé like
 I finde a tale, how Frederike,
 Of Romé that time emperour,
 Herde, as he went, a great clamour
 Of two beggers upon the way,
 That one of hem began to say :
 'Ha lord, wel may the man be riche,
 Whom that a king list for to riche.'
 That other said : 'No thingé so,
 But he is riche and well bego,
 To whom that God wol sendé welc.'
 And thus they maden wordés fele,
 Wherof this lord hath hedé nome
 And did hem bothé for to come
 To the paleis where he shall ete,
 And bad ordeigné for her mete
 Two pasteés which he let do make ;
 A capon in that one was bake,
 And in that other, for to winne,
 Of floreins all that may withinne
 He let do put a great richesse,
 And even aliche as man may gesse
 Outward they weré bothé two,
 This begger was commaunded tho,

¹ *Wite*, blame.

He that which held him to the king,
 That he first chese upon this thing.
 Hesigh hem, but he felt hem nought,
 So that upon his owne thought
 He chese the capon and forsoke
 That other, which his felaw toke.
 But whan he wist how that it ferde,
 He said aloud, that men it herde :
 ' Now have I certainly conceived,
 That he may lightly be deceived
 That tristeth unto mannes helpe.
 But wel is him, that God wol helpe,
 For he stant on the siker side,
 Whiche ellés shuldé go beside.
 I se my felaw wel recouer,
 And I mot dwellé stillé pouer.
 Thus spake the begger his entent,
 And pouer he cam and pouer he went,
 Of that he hath richessé sought
 His infortúne it woldé nought.
 So may it shewe in sondry wise
 Betwene Fortune and Covetise
 The chaunce is cast upon a dee,
 But yet full oft a man may see
 Inough of suché nethéles
 Which ever put hem self in pres
 To get hem good, and yet they faile.

"And for to speke of this entaile
 Touchend of Love in thy matere,
 My godé sone, as thou might here,
 That right as it with tho men stood
 Of infortúne of worldés good,
 As thou hast herd me tell above,
 Right so full ofte it stant by Love ;
 Though thou coveite it evermore
 Thou shalt nought have o dele the
 more,

But only that which the is shape,
 The remenaunt is but a jape.
 And nethéles inough of tho
 There ben that now coveiten so
 That where as they a woman se,
 To ten or twelvé though there be,
 The love is now so unavised
 That where the beauté stant assised

The mannes herte anone is there
 And rouneth¹ talés in her ere
 And saith, how that he loveth streite.
 And thus he set him to coveite,
 An hundred though he sigh a day,
 So wolde he more than he may.
 So for the greté Covetise
 Of soty² and of fool emprise
 In eche of hem he fint somewhat,
 That pleseth him, or this or that :
 Some one, for she is white of skinne,
 Some one, for she is noble of kinne,
 Someone, for she hath a rody cheke,
 Some one, for that she semeth meke,
 Some one, for she hath eyen grey,
 Someone, for she can laugh and pley,
 Someone, for she is longe and small,
 Some one, for she is lithe and tall,
 Some one, for she is pale and bleche,
 Some one, for she is softe of speche,
 Some one, for that she is camused,³
 Some one, for she hath nought ben
 used,
 Some one, for she can daunce and
 sing,

So that some thing of his liking
 He fint ; and though no more he
 fele

But that she hath a litel hele,
 It is inough, that he therfore
 Her love ; and thus an hundred score,
 While they be new, he wolde he had,
 Whom he forsaketh she shall be bad.
 The blindé man no colour demeth,
 But all is one right as him semeth ;
 So hath his lust no jugément
 Whom Covetise of Lové blent.⁴
 Ilim thenketh, to his Covetise,
 How all the world ne may suffice,
 For by his will he wolde have all,
 If that it mighté so befall.
 So is he comun as the sirete,

¹ Rouneth, whisper.

² Soty, folly.

³ Camused, with a curve in the nose.

⁴ Blent, blinds.

I setté nought of his beyète.
My sone, hast thou such cove-
tise?"—

"Nay fader, such love I despise,
And while I livé shal don ever,
For in good feith yet had I lever
Than to coveite in suche a wey
To ben for ever till I deie
As pouer as Job and lovécles
Out taken one, for havéles
His thonkés¹ is no man alive,
For that a man shulde all unthrive
There ought no wisé man coveite,
The lawé was nought set so streite.
Forthy my self withall to save
Suche one there is I woldé have
And none of all this other mo."—

"Mysone, of that thou woldest so,
I am nought wroth; but over this
I woll the tellen howe it is.
For there be men which other wise
Right only for the covetise
Of that they seen a woman riche,
There wol they all her love affiche.
Nought for the beauté of her face,
Ne yet for vertu, ne for grace,
Which she hath ellés right inough,
But for the parke and for the plough
And other thing which therto
longeth,

For in none other wise hem longeth
To lové but² they profit finde.
And if the profit be behinde,
Her³ love is ever lesse and lesse,
For after that she hath richesse
Her love is of proportiún.
If thou hast such conditiún,
My soné, tell right as it is."—

"Min holy fader, nay iwis,
Condición such have I none.
For truly fader, I love one
So well, with all min hertés thought,

That certés though she haddé
nought

And were as pouer as Medeá,
Which was exiléd for Creusá,
I wolde her nought the lassé love;
Ne though she were at her above
As was the riché quene Candace,
Which to deservé love and grace
To Alisaundre that was king
Yaf many a worthy riché thing;
Or ellés as Pantasilée,
Which was the quene of Feminee
And great richessé with her nam
Whan she for love of Hector cam
To Troy in rescousse of the town;
I am of such condiciún,
That though my lady of her selve
Were al so riche as suché twelve,
I couthe nought though it were so
No better love her than I do.
For I love in so pleine¹ a wise,
That for to speke of Covetise
As for pouerte or for richesse
My love is nouthér more ne lesse.
For in good feith I trowé this,
So covetous no man there is
For why and he ny lady sigh
That he through loking of his eye
Neshuld have such a stroke withinne
That for no gold he mighté winne
He shuldé nought her love asterte
But if he lefté there his herte:
Be so it wéré such a man
That couthe skille of a woman.
For there ben men so rudé some
Whan they among the women come
They gon under protectiún,
That love and his affectiún
Neshal nought take hem by the sleve
For they ben out of that beleve;
Hem lusteth of no lady chere,
But ever thenken there and here
Where that her golde is in the cofre
And wol none other lové profer.

¹ *Haveles his thonkes*, wanting possession,
with his own good will.

² *But*, unless.

³ *Her* their.

¹ *Pleine*, full.

But who sowot what lovê amounteth
And by resón truliche accompteth,
Than may he knowe and taken hede
That all the lust of womanhede
Which may ben in a ladies face
My lady hath, and eke of grace,
If men shuld yiven her apprise
They may wel say how she is wise
And sober and simple of coun-
tenaunce,

And all that to good governaunce
Belongeth of a worthy wight
She hath plainly. For thilké night
That she was bore as for the nones
Naturé set in her at ones
Beauté with bounté so besein,
That I may well afferme and sain,
I sigh yet never créature
Of comlyhedé and of fetüre

In any kingés regiön
Be liche her in comparisön.
And therto, as I have you tolde,
Yet hath she more a thousand folde
Of bounté, and shortly to telle
She is the puré hede and weile
And mirrour and ensample of good;
Who so her vertues understood
Me thenketh it ought inough suffise
Withouten other Covetise
To lové suche one and to serve,
Which with her cheré can deserve
To be belovéd better iwis
Than she par cas that richest is
And hath of golde a millión.
Suche hath be min opiniön
And ever shall. But nethéles
I say she is nought havéles,¹
That she nis riche and well at ese
And hath inough wherwith to plesé
Of worldés good whom that her list.
But o thing wold I wel ye wist,
That never for no worldés good
Min hert unto ward hiré stood,
But only right for puré love,

¹ *Havéles*, wanting possessions.

That wot the highé God above.
Now fader, what say ye therto?"—

"My sone, I say it is wel do.
For take of this right good beleve,
What man that wol him self releve
To love in any other wise
He shall wel finde his Covetise
Shall soré greve him atté laste,
For such a lové may nought laste.
But now men sain in ouré daies
Men maken but a few assaies
But if the causé be richesse,
Forthý the love is well the lesse.
And who that wold ensamples telle
By oldé daiés as they felle,
Than might a man wel understonde
Such lové may nought longé stonde.
Now herken, sone, and thou shalt
here

A great ensample of this matere.,

To trete upon the cas of love,
So as we tolden here above,
I findé write a wonder thing.
Of Puilé whilom was a king,
A man of high complexion
And yong, but his affection
After the nature of his age
Was yet not falle in his coráge
The lust of women for to knowe.
So it betid upon a throwe,
This lord fell into great sikenesse.
P'hisique hath done the besinesse
Of sondry curés many one
To make him hole, and therupon
A worthy maister which there was,
Yaf him counseil upon this cas,
That if he wolde have parfite hele,
He shuldé with a woman dele.
For than he said him redely,
That he shal be al hole therby,
And other wise he knew no cure.
The king, which stood in aventure
Of life and deth for medicine,
Assented was, and of covine
His steward, whom he trusteth well,

He toke and told him every dele,
How that this maister haddé said.
And therupon he hath him praid
And chargéd upon his legeaunce,
That he do maké purveaunce
And badde him, how that ever it
stood,

That he shall sparé for no good,
For his will is right well to pay.
The steward said, he wolde assay.

“ But now here after thou shalt
wite,

As I finde in the bokés write,
What Covetise in Lové doth.
This steward, for to tellé soth,
Amongés all the mēn alive
A lusty lady hath to wive,
Which nethéles for gold he toke
And nought for love, as saith the
• boke.

A riché marchaunt of the londe
Her fader was, and he her fonde
So worthély and such richesse
Of worldés good and such largesse
With her he yaf in mariáge,
That only for thilke avauntagé
Of good the steward hath her take,
For lucre and nought for lovés sake.
And that was afterward wel sene.
Nowe herken, what it woldé mene.
This steward in his owne hert
Sigh that his lord may nought astert
His maladié but he have

A lusty woman him to save,
And tho he woldé yive inough
Of his tresor ; wherof he drough
Great Covetise into his minde
And set his honour fer behind.
Thus he whom gold hath oversette
Was trapped in his owné nette.
The gold hath made his wittés lame,
So that sechénd his owné shame
He rouneth in the kingés ere
And said him that he wisté where
A gentil and a lusty one

Tho was, and thider wold he gone,
But he mote yivé yestés great,
For but it be through great beyete
Of gold, he said, he shuld nought
spede.

The king him bad upon the nede
That take an hundred pound he
sholde

And yive it wheré that he wolde,
Be so it were in worthy place.

And thus to stonde in lovés grace
This king his gold hath abandóned.
And whan this tale was full rouned,
The steward toke the gold and went
Within his herte and many a went¹
Of covetisé than he caste,
Wherof a purpos atté laste
Ayein love and ayein his right
He toke and saide, how thilké night
His wife shall liggé by the king.

• oth thenkénd upon this thing
Toward his inn till he cam home
Into the chambre, and than he nome
His wife and tolde her al the cas.
And she, which red for shamé was,
With bothe her hondés hath him
praid

Knelénd and in this wise said,
That she to reson and to skill
In what thing that he biddé will
Is redy for to done his heste
But² this thing that were nought
honéste,

That he for gold her shuldé selle.
And he tho with his wordés felle
Forth with his gastly countenaunce
Saith, that she shall done obeisaunce
And folwe his wille in every place.
And thus through strength of his
manáce

Her innocéce is overladdé,
Wherof she was so sore adradde,
That she his will mot nede obey.
And therupon was shape a wey.

¹ Went, turn.

² But, except.

When it was nigh upon the day
The steward thanné where she lay
Cam to the bed and in this wise
Hath biddé that she shulde arise.
The king saith : ' Nay, she shall
nought go.'

The steward said ayein : ' Nought so,
For she mot gone er it be knowe,
And so I swore at thilké throwe,
Whan I her fetté to you here.'
The king his talé wol nought here
And saith how that he hath her
bought

Forthy she shall departé nought,
But who she was he knew nothing.
Tho cam the steward to the king
And praid him that withouté shame
In saving of her godé name
He mighté leaden home ayeine
This lady, and hath told him pleine
How that it was his owné wife.
The king his ere unto this strife
Hathleid, and whan that he it herde,
Well nigh out of his wit he ferde
And said : ' Ha, caitif most of alle,
Where was it ever er this befallé,
That any cokard in this wise
Betoke his wife for covetise.
Thou hast bothe her and me beguiled
And eke thin own estate reviled,
Wherof that buxom unto the
Here after shall she never be.
For this avow to God I make
After this day, if I the take,
Thou shalt be hongéd and to-drawe.
Now loke anone thou be withdrawe,
So that I se the never more !'
This steward thanné drad him sore,
With all the hasté that he may
And fled away the samé day,
And was exiled out of lond.

Lo, there a nicé husébond,
Which thus hath loste his wife for
ever.

But nethéles she hadde a lever ;

The king her weddeth and honoúr-
eth,

Wherof her namé she soccoureth,
Which erst was lost through covetise
Of him that lad her other wise
And hath him self also forlore.

" My soné, be thou ware therfore,
Where thou shalt love in any place,
That thou no Covetise embrace,
The which is nought of Lovés kinde.
But for all that a man may finde
Now in this time of thilké rage
Full great disese in mariáge,
Whan venim medleth with the sucre
And mariáge is made for lucre
Or for the lust or for the hele,
What man that shall with other dele
He may nought failé to repent."—

" My fader, such is min entent.
But nethéles good is to have,
For good may ofté timé save
The lové which shulde ellés spille.
But God which wot min hertes wille
I dar wel také to witnessé,
Yet was I never for richesse
Be-et with mariáge none,
For all min herte is upon one
So frely that in the persone
Stant all my worldés joy alone.
I axé nouthér park né plough,
If I her hadde, it were inough,
Her lové shuldé me suffise
Withouten other Covetise.
Lo now, my fader, as of this
Touchend of me right as it is
My shrifte I am beknowé plein,
And if ye wol ought elles sain
Of Covetise if there be more
In Love, agropeth out the sore.

My soné, thou shalt under-
sonde,

How Covetise hath yet on honde
In speciáll two counseilors,
That ben also his prócurors.
The first of hem is Fals Winesse,

Which ever is redy to wnesse
What thing his maister woll him
hote.¹

Perjúrie is the second hote,²
Which spareth nought to swere an
othe

Though it be fals and God be
wrothe,

That one shall fals wnesse bere,
That other shall the thing forswere
When he is chargéd on the boke.

So what with hoke and what with
croke

They make her maister ofte winne
And woll nought knowe what is sinne
For Covetise, and thus men sain
They maken many a fals bargain.
There may no trewe quarel arise
In thilke queste of thilke assise
Where as they two the people en-
forme.

For they kepe ever o³ maner forme,
That upon golde her⁴ conscience
They founde and take her evidénce.
And thus with fals Wnesse and
othe

They winne hem meté, drink and
clothes.

Right so there be, who that hem
knewe,

Of these lovér's ful many untrewé.
Now may a woman finde now,
That eche of hem whan he shall
wowe

Anone he woll his hand down lain
Upon a boke and swere and sain
That he woll feith and trouthe bere.
And thus he profreth him to swere
To serven ever till he deie,
And all is verray trechery.
For whan the soth him selven trieth,
The more he swereth the more he
lieth,

Whan he his feith maketh allther-
most,¹

Than may a woman trust him lest,
For till he may his will acheve,
He is no lenger for to leve.

Thus is the trouthe of love exiled,
And many a good woman beguiled.

"And eke to speke of Fals Wit-
nesse

There be now many such I gesse,
That lich unto the provisours
They make her privé procurours
To tell how there is such man,
Which is worthy to love and can
All that a good man shuldé conne,
So that with lesing is begonne
The cause, in which they woll
procede.

And al so siker as the Crede
They make of that they knowen fals,
And thus full oft about the hals²
Love is of falsé men embraced.
But lové which is so purchaced,
Cometh afterward to litel prise.
Forthy, my sone, if thou be wise.
Now thou hast heid this evidénce,
Thou might thin owné conscience
Oppose, if thou hast be such one."—

"Nay God wot, fader, I am none
Ne never was, for, as men saith,
Whan that a man shall make his feith
His hert and tunge must accorde.
For if so be that they discorde
Than he is fals, and ellés nought,
And I dare say as of my thought
In love it is nought discordable
Unto my word, but accordable.
And in this wisé, fader, I
May righté well swere and saulý,
That I my lady lové well,
For that accordeth every dele :
It nedeth nought to my soth sawe
That I wnesse shuldé drawe

¹ *Note*, command.

³ *O*, one.

² *Note*, called.

⁴ *Her*, their.

¹ *Allthermost*, most of all.

² *Hals*, neck.

Into this day, for ever yit
 Ne might it sinke into my wit
 That I my counseil shoulde say
 To any wight or me bewrey¹
 To sechen helpe in such manere,
 But onely for my lady dere.
 And though a thousand men it wiste
 That I her love, and than hem liste
 With me to swere and to witnesse,
 Yet weré that no fals witnesse.
 For I dare unto this trowth dwelle,
 I love her more than I can telle.
 Thus am I, fader, giltéles,
 As ye have herde, and nethéles
 In youré dome I put it all."—

"My soné, wite in speciall
 It shall nought comunliché faile,
 All though it for a time availle
 That Fals Witnesse his causé spede
 Upon the point of his falshede;
 It shall well afterward be kid,
 Wherof so as it is betid
 Ensamplé of such thingés blinde
 In a croniqué write I finde.

The goddesse of the see Thetis,
 She had a sone, and his name is
 Achilles, whom to kepe and warde,
 While he was yonge, and into warde
 She thought him sautly to betake
 As she which draddé for his sake
 Of that was said of prophecie,
 That he at Troié sholdé deie
 Whan that the citee was belein.
 Forthý so as the bokés sain,
 She cast her wit in sondry wise,
 How she him mighté so disguise
 That no man shuld his body knowe.
 And so befell that ilké throwe
 While that she thought upon this
 dede,

There was a king, which Lichomede
 Was hote, and he was well begone
 With fairé daughters many one
 And dwelté fer out in an ile.

¹ *Me bewrey*, disclose myself.

Now shalt thou here a wonder wile.
 This quené which the mother was
 Of Áchillés, upon this cas
 Her sone as he a maiden were
 Let clothen in the samé gere,
 Which longeth unto womanhede.
 And he was yonge and toke none
 hede

But suffreth all that she him dede,
 Wherof she hath her women bede
 And chargeth by her othés alle,
 How so it afterward befallé,
 That they discover nought this thing,
 But feigne and make a knoueleching
 Upon the counseil which was nome,
 In every placé where they come
 To telle and to witnesse this,
 Howe he her ladies doughter is.
 And right in such a maner wise
 She bad they shuld her don servise,
 So that Achilles underfongeth
 As to a yong lady belongeth
 Honouúr, service and reverence.
 For Thetis with great diligence
 Him hath so taught and so affaited
 That, how so that he were awaited,
 With sobre and goodly contenance
 He shuld his womanhede avaunce
 That none the sothé knowé might,
 But that in every mannés sight
 He shuldé seme a puré maide.
 And in such wise as she him said
 Achilles, which that ilké while
 Was yonge, upon him selfe to smile
 Began, whan he was so besein.
 And thus after the bokés sain
 With fiette of perle upon his hede
 All fressshé betwene white and red,
 As he which tho was tender of age,
 Stood the colour in his viságe,
 That for to loke upon his cheke
 And seen his childly maner eke
 He was a woman to beholde,
 And than his moder to him tolde,
 That she him haddé so begone

By causé that she thoughté gone
 To Lichomede at thilké tide,
 Where that she said, he shulde abide
 Amonge his daughters for to dwelle.
 Achilles herd his moder telle
 And wisté nought the causé why.
 And nethéles full buxomly
 He was redý to that she bad,
 Wherof his moder was right glad.
 To Lichomede and forth they went,
 And whan the king knewe her entent
 And sigh this yongé doughter there,
 And that it came unto his ere
 Of such recórd, of such witnesse,
 He haddé right a great gladnése
 Of that he bothé sigh and herde,
 As he that wot nought how it ferde
 Upon the counseil of the nede.
 But for all that king Lichomede
 Hath toward him his doughter take
 And for Thetis his moder sake
 He put her into compaigny
 To dwellé with Deidamy,
 His owné doughter the eldést,
 The fairest and the comliest
 Of al his doughters which he had.
 Lo, thus Thetis the causé lad
 And lefté there Achilles feigned,
 As he which hath himself restraigned
 In all that ever he may and can
 Out of the maner of a man
 And toke his womanisshé chere,
 Wherof unto his beddésere
 Deidamy he hath by night,
 Where kindé will him selvé right
 After the philosóphres sain,
 There may no wight be there ayein.
 And it befell that ilké throwe
 At Troié, where the siegé lay
 Upon the cause of Menelay
 And of his quené dame Heleine,
 The Gregois hadden mochel peine
 All day to fight and to assaile.
 But for they mighten nought availe
 So noble a citee for to winne

A privé counseil they beginne
 In sondry wisé where they treat
 And atté laste among the great
 They fellen unto this accorde,
 That Protheus of his recorde,
 Which was an astronomien
 And eke a great magicien,
 Shulde of his calculatió
 Sechen of constellatió
 How they the citee mighten gette;
 And he, which haddé nought foryete
 Of that belongeth to a clerke,
 His study set upon this werke.
 So longe his wit about he caste,
 Till that he founde out atté laste,
 But if they hadden Achilles
 Her werré shall ben endéles.
 And over that he tolde hem pleine
 In what manér he was beseine
 And in what place he shall befounde;
 So that within a litel stounde¹
 Ulixes forth with Diomede
 Upon this point to Lichomede
 Agámenon to-gider sente.
 But Ulixes, er he forth wente,
 Which was one of the mosté wise
 Ordeinéð hath in such a wise,
 That he the mosté riche array
 Wherof a woman may be gay
 With him he toké manifolde;
 And overmore, as it is tolde,
 An harneis for a lusty knight,
 Which burnéd was as silver bright.
 Of swerde, of plate, and eke of maille,
 As though he shuldé do bataile,
 He toke also with him by ship.
 And thus to-gider in felaship
 Forth gone this Diomede and he
 In hopé till they mighten se
 The placé where Achilles is.
 The wind stood thannénought amis,
 But every topsailecole² it blewé,
 Till Ulixés the marches knewe,

¹ *Stounde*, interval of time, hour.

² *Topsailecole*. Cole, in Godefroy's *Dictionnaire de l'Ancienne Langue Française*, is an

Where Lichomede his regné had.
The stirésman so well him lad
That they ben comen sauf to londe,
Where they gone out upon the
stronde

Into the burgh, where that they
founde

The king; and he which hath
facounde,¹

Ulixes, didé the messáge.

But the counseile of his coráge,²

Why that he came, he toldé nought,

But underneth he was bethought

In what manér he might aspíe

Achilles fro Deídamy

And fro these other that there were,

Full many a lusty lady there.

"They plaide hem there a day
or two,

And as it was fortúned so,

It fell that time in suche a wise

To Bachus that a sacrifice

These yongé ladies shulden make.

And for the straungé mennés sake

That comen fro the siege of

Troy,

They maden well the moré joy.

There was revéll, there was daunc-
ing,

And every life³ which couthé sing

Of lusty women in the route

A fressh caróll hath song aboute.

But for all this yet nethéles

The Grekes unknowe of Áchillés

So weren, that in no degre

They couthen wité which was he

Ne by his vois, ne by his pas.

Ulixes than upon the cas

A thing of high prudéce hath
wrought.

unexplained word illustrated by this passage:
"Se mistrent en barges, et alerent aux sa-
landres, et en prirent les xvii. et l'une echapa,
qui estoit a la cole."

¹ *Facounde*, eloquence.

² *Coráge*, thought in his heart.

³ *Life*, body.

For thilk array which he hath
brought

To yive among the women there

He let do fetten¹ all the gere

Forth, with a knightés harneis eke.

In all the contré for to seke

Men sholden nought a fairer se.

And every thing in his degré

Endelong upon a bourde he laide.

To Lichomede and than he preide,

That every lady chesé sholde

What thing of allé that she wolde

And take it as by way of yift,

For they hem self it shuldé shift

He saide after her owné wille.

Achilles thanné stood nought stille,

Whan he the brighté helm behelde,

The swerd, the hauberk and the
shelde,

His herté fell therto anone,

Of all that other wold he none;

The knightés gere he underfongeth

And thilke array which that be-
longeth

Unto the women he forsoke.

And in this wise, as saith the boke,

They knowen thanné whiche he was,

For he goth forth the greté pas

Into the chambre where he lay,

Anone and madé no delay,

He armeth him in knightly wise,

That better can no man devise

And as fortúné shulde falle,

He came so forth to-foré hem alle

As he which tho was glad inough.

But Lichomédé nothing lough²

Whan that he sigh how that it ferde.

For than he wisté well and herfé

His daughter haddé be forlain.

But that he was so oversein

The wonder overgoth his wit.

For in cronique is writé yit

Thing which shall never be foryete,

¹ *Let do fetten*, caused to be fetched.

² *Lough*, laughed.

How that Achilles hath begete
 Pirrus upon Deidamý,
 Wherof came out the trechery
 Of fals Witnessé when he saide
 How that Achilles was a maide.
 But that was nothing sené tho,
 For he is to the siegé go
 Forth with Ulixes and Diomedé.

“Lo, thus was provéd in the dede
 And fully spoke at thilké while,
 If o woman an other beguile
 Where is there any sikernesse,
 Whan Thetis which was than god-
 desse

Deidamý hath so bejaped,
 I not how it shall bene escaped
 With the womén whose innocence
 Is now al day through such credence
 Deceivéd ofte as it is sene
 With men that such untrouthé mene.
 For they ben sligh in suche a wise,
 That they by sleight and by queintise
 Of fals witnessé bringen inne
 That doth hem ofté for to winne
 Where they ben nought worthy
 therto.

Forthy, my soné, do nought so.”—

“My fader, as of fals witnessé
 The trouth and the matere expresse
 Touchend of love, howe it hath ferde,
 As ye have tolde I have well herde.
 But for ye saiden other wise,
 How thilké Vice of Covetise
 Hath yet Perjúrie of his accorde,
 If that you list of some recorde
 To tellen an other tale also
 In Lovés cause of time ago,
 What thing it is to be forswore,
 I woldé préie you therfore,
 Wherof I might ensample take.”—

“~~Thy~~ godé soné, and for thy
 sake

Touchend of this I shall fulfill
 Thin axing at thin owné will
 And the matere I shall declare

How the womén deceived are
 Whan they so tendre hertés bere
 Of that they heren men so swere.
 But whan it cometh unto thassay,
 They finde it fals another day,
 As Jason did unto Medee,
 Which stant yet of auctorité
 In token and in memoriall,
 Wherof the tale in speciáll
 Is in the boke of Troié write,
 Which I shall do the for to wite.

“In Grece whilom was a king,
 Of whom the fame and knoueleching
 Beleveth¹ yet, and Peleús
 He highté, but it fell him thus,
 That his Fortúne her whele so lad,
 That he no childe his owné had
 To regnen after his decess.
 He had a brother nethéles,
 Whose righté namé was Eson,
 And he the worthy knight Jason
 Begat, the which in every londe
 All other passéd of his honde
 In armés, so that he the best
 Was naméd and the worthiest.
 He soughté worship over all.
 Now herken, and I tellé shall
 An adventuré that he sought,
 Which afterward full dere he bought.

There was an ilé, which Colchós
 Was clopéd, and therof aros
 Great speche in every londe aboute,
 That such merveilé was none oute
 In all the widé world no where
 As tho was in that ilé there.
 There was a shepe, as it was tolde,
 The which his flees bare all of
 golde,

And so the goddés had it sette
 That it ne might away be fette
 By power of no worldés wight.
 And yet full many a worthy knight
 It had assaiéd as they dorste,
 And ever it fell hem to the worste.

¹ Beleveth, remains.

But he that wolde it nought forsake
 But of his knighthode undertake
 To do what thing therto belongeth,
 This worthy Jason, sore alongeth
 To se the straungé regions
 And knowé the conditions
 Of other marches where he went.
 And for that cause his hole entent
 He setté Colchos for to seche
 And therupon he made a speche
 To Peleús his eme¹ the king.
 And he wel paid was of that thing
 And shope anone for his passáge
 And such as were of his lignáge
 With other knightés whiche he chees
 With him he toke, and Hercules
 Which full was of chiválerie
 With Jason went in compaignie,
 And that was in the month of May
 Whan coldé stormes were away ;
 The wind was good, the ship was
 yare,
 They toke her leve and forth they fare
 Towárd Colchós. But on the way
 What hem befelle is long to say,
 How Lamedon the king of Troy,
 Which oughté well have made hem
 joy
 Whan they to rest a while him preide,
 Out of his lond he them congeide.
 And so fell the dissentiún
 Whiche after was destructiún
 Of that citee, as men may here.
 But that is nought to my matere,
 But thus the worthy folk Gregois
 Fro that king which was nought
 curtois
 And fro his londe with sail updrawe
 They went hem forth, and many a
 sawe
 They made and many a great
 manáce ;
 Till atté last into that place
 Which as they soughté they arrive,

¹ *Eme*, uncle.

And striken sail and forth as blive¹
 They sent unto the king and tolden
 Who weren there and what they
 wolden.

Oötés, which was thanné king,
 Whan that he herdé this tidng
 Of Jason which was comen there,
 And of these other what they were,
 He thoughté done hem great
 worship.

For they anone come out of ship
 And straught unto the king they
 wente

And by the honde Jason he hente,
 And that was at the paleis gate,
 So fer the king came on his gate
 Toward Jasón to done him chere.
 And he, whom lacketh no manere,
 Whan he the king sigh in preséce
 Yaf him ayein such reverence
 As to the kingés state belongeth.
 And thus the king him under-
 fongeth

And Jason in his arme he caught
 And forth into the hall he straught,
 And there they sit and speke of
 thinges.

And Jason tolde him tho tidinges
 Why he was come, and faire him
 preide

To haste his time, and the king saide :

‘ Jason, thou art a worthy knight,
 But it lieth in no mannés might
 To done that thou art comé fore.
 There hath bene many a knight
 forlore

Of that they wolden it assaie.’
 But Jason wolde him noughtes maie
 And saide : ‘ Of every worldés cure
 Fortúné stant in aventure,
 Paraunter² well, paraunter wo.
 But how as ever that it go,
 It shall be with min honde assaied.

¹ *As blive*, quickly.² *Paraunter*, peradventure

The king tho helde him nought
wel paied,

For he the Grekés soré dredde,
In aunter if Jason ne spedde
He mighté therof bere a blame,
For tho was all the worldés fame
In Grece as for to speke of armes.
Forthý he drad him of his harmes
And gan to prechen and to prey.
But Jason woldé nought obey,
But said, he wolde his purpos holde
For ought that any man him tolde.
Theking whan he these wordés herde
And sigh how that this knight
answérde,

Yet for he woldé make him glad,
After Medea gone he bad,
Which was his doughter, and she
cam

And Jason, which good hedé nam,
Whan he her sigh ayein her goth.
And she, which was him nothing loth,
Welcóméd him into that londe
And softé toke him by the honde
And down they setten bothé same.¹
She had herd spoken of his name
And of his greté worthinesse,
Forthý she gan her eye impresse
Upon his face and his stature
And thought, how never créature
Was so welfarend as was he.
And Jason right in such degré
Ne mighténought witholde his loke,
But so good hede on her he toke
That him ne thought under the
heven

Of beauté sigh he never her even
With all that felle to womanhede.
Thus eche of other token hede
Though there no word was of re-
corde,

Her hertés both of one accorde
Ben sette to loven, but as tho
There mighten ben no wordés mo.

¹ *Bothé same*, both together.

The king made him great joy and
fest,

To all his men he yaf an hest,
So as they wolde his thank deserve
That they shulde allé Jason serve
While that he woldé theré dwelle.
And thus the day, shortlý to telle,
With many merthés they dispent,
Till night was come, and tho they
went;

Echone of other toke his leve,
Whan they no lenger mighten leve.¹
I not² how Jason that night slepe,
But well I wot, that of the shepe
For which he cam into that ile
He thoughté but a litel while;
All was Medea that he thought,
So that in many wise he sought
His wit, wakénd er it was day,
Some timé ye, some timé nay,
Some timé thus, some timé so,
As he was steréd to and fro
Of love and eke of his conquest,
As he was holde of his behest.
And thus he rose up by the morwe
And toke him self seint John to
borwe³

And saide, he woldé first beginne
At love, and after for to winne
The flecs of gold for which he come,
And thus to him good herte he nome.

“Medea right the samé wise
Till day cam, that she must arise,
Lay and bethought her all the night
How she that noble worthy knight
By any waie mighté wedde.
And wel she wist, if he ne spedde
Of thing which he had undertake,
She might her self no purpose take.
For if he deiede of his bataile,
She musté than algate faile

¹ *Leve*, remain.

² *Nof*, know not.

³ *Seint John to borwe*, St. John for surety,
a common way of invoking a saint in the Middle
Ages. Jason swore, like a good knight, by St.
John.

To geten him, whan he were dede.
 Thus she began to setté rede
 And torne about her wittés all
 To loke how that it mighté fall,
 That she with him had a leisr
 To speke and telle of her desir.
 And so it fell the samé day
 That Jason with that sweté may¹
 To-gider set and hadden space
 To speke, and he besought her
 grace.

And she his talé goodly herde
 And afterward she him answérde
 And saidé: 'Jason, as thou wilt
 Thou might be sauf, thou might
 be spilt,

For witté well, that never man,
 But if he couthe that I can,
 Ne mighté that fortune acheve,
 For which thou comest. But as I
 leve,

If thou wolt holdé covenaut
 To love of all the remenaunt,
 I shall thy life and honour save,
 That thou the flees of gold shalt
 have.'

He said: 'Al at your owné wille,
 Madame, I shall trulý fulfille
 Your hesté, while my life may last.
 Thus longe he praid and atté last
 Shegraunteth, and behight him this,
 That whan night cometh and it
 time is

She wolde him sendé certainly
 Such one that shulde him prively
 Alone into her chambre bringe.
 He thonketh her of that tidinge,
 For of that grace is him begonne
 Him thinketh al other thingés
 wonne.

"The day made ende and lost
 his sight
 And comen was the derké night,
 Whiche all the daiés eyé blent.

¹ *May*, maid.

"Jason toke 'leve and forth he
 went,

And whan he cam out of the prees
 He toke to counseil Hercules
 And tolde him how it was betid,
 And praidé it shuldé well ben hid,
 And that he woldé loke about
 The whilés that he shall be out.
 Thus as he stood and hedé name,
 A maiden fro Medea came,
 The fairest and the wisest eke.
 And she with simple chere and
 meke,

Whan she him sigh, wax all ashamed.
 Tho was her talé newe entamed
 For sikernesse of mariáge,
 She fette forth a riche ymáge,
 Was the figúre of Jupitér,
 And Jason swore and saidé there,
 That also wis god shuld him helpe,
 That if Medea did him helpe,
 That he his purpose mighté winne,
 They shuldé never part atwinne,
 But ever while him lasteth life,
 He woldé holde hér for his wife.
 They hadden bothe what they wolde.
 And than at leiser she him tolde
 And gan fro point to point enforme
 Of this bataile and all the forme,
 Whiche as he shuldé findé there,
 Whan he to thilé¹ comé were.
 She saide, at entré of the pas
 How Mars, which God of Armés was,
 Hath set two oxen sterne and stoute,
 That casten fire and flame aboute
 Both atté mouth and at the nase,
 So that they setten all on blase
 What thing that passeth hem be-
 twene.

And furthermore upon the grene
 There goth, the flees of gold to kepe,
 A serpent which may never slepe,
 Thus who that ever it shulde winne,
 The fire to stoppe he mot beginne

¹ *Thill*, the island.

Which that the fiercé bestés caste,
And daunt he mot hem atté laste,
So that he may hem yoke and drive,
And there upon he mot as blive
The serpent with such strength
assaile

That he may sleen him by bataile,
Of which he mot theteethoutdrawe,
As it belongeth to that lawe,
And than he must the oxen yoke
Til they have with a plough-to-broke
A furch of lond, in which arow
The teeth of thadder he must sow.
And therof shull arisé knightes
Well arméd at allé rightes;
Of hem is nought to taken hede,
For eche of hem in hastihede
Shall otherslee with dethés wounde.
And thus whan they ben laid to
grounde

Than mot he to the goddés pray
And go so forth and take his pray.
But if he faile in any wise
Of that ye heré me devise,
There may be set non other wey,
That he ne must algatés deie.
'Now have I told the peril all
I woll you tellen forth withall,'
Quod Medeá to Jason tho,
'That ye shull knowen er ye go
Ayein the venim and the fire,
What shall be the recoverire.
But, siré, for it is nigh day,
Ariseth up, so that I may
Deliver you what thing I have
That may your life and honour save.'
Tho toke she forth a riché tie¹
Made all of gold and of perrie,
Out of the which she nam a ring,
The stone was worth all other thing.
She saidé, while he wold it weie,
There mighté no perfl him dere;²
In water may it nought be dreint,
Where as it cometh the fire is queint,

¹ Tie, casket.² Dere, injure.

It daunteth eke the cruel heste,
There may none quad¹ that man
areste,

Where so he be on see or londe,
That hath this ring upon his honde.
And over that she gan to sain,
That if a man will ben unsein,
Within his hond hold close the
stone

And he may invisfble gone.
The ring to Jason she betought²
And so forth after she him taught
What sacrifice he shuldé make.
And gan out of her cofre take
Him thought an hevenly figúre,
Which all by charme and by conjúre
Was wrought, and eke it was through
writ

With namés which he shuldé wite,
As she him taughté tho to rede,
And bad him as he woldé spede
Withouté rest of any while,
Whan he were londed in that ile,
He shuldé make his sacrifice
And rede his carect³ in the wise
As she him taught, on knees down
bent

Thre sithés⁴ toward orient.
For so shuld he the goddés plese
And win him selven mochel ese.
And whan he had it thriés radde
To open a buíst⁵ she him badde,
That she there toke him in present,
And was full of such oignément
That there was fire ne venim none
That shuldé fastné him upon
Whan that he were anoint withall.
Forthý she taught him how he shall
Anoint his armés all aboute,
And for he shuldé nothing doubte
She toke him than a maner⁶ gluc
The which was of so great vertúe

¹ Quad, evil.² Betought, entrusted.³ Carect, written charm⁴ Sithés, times.⁵ Buíst, box.⁶ A maner, a kind of.

That where a man it shuldé cast
 It shuldé binde anon so fast
 That no man might it done away.
 And that she bad by allé way
 He shulde into the mouthés throw
 Of tho twein oxen that fire blow,
 Therof to stoppen the malíce
 The glue shall serve of that office.
 And over that, her oignément
 Her ring and her enchauntément
 Aycin the serpent shulde him were,¹
 Till he him slee with swerd or spere.
 And than he may saufly inough
 His oxen yoke into the plough
 And tne teeth sowe in such a wise
 Till he the knightés se arise,
 And eche of other down be láide
 In suche a maner as I have saide.

"Lo, thus Medea for Jasón
 Ordeineth, and praieth therupon
 That he nothing foryeté sholde,
 And eke she praieth him that he
 wolde,

Whan he hath all his armés done,
 To groundé knele and thonke anone
 The goddés, and so forth by ese
 The flees of golde he shuldé sese.
 And whan he had it seséd so,
 That than he weré sone ago
 Withouten any tarieng.

Whan this was saide, into weping
 She fel, as she that was through-
 nome

With love and so fer overcome
 That all her worlde on him she
 sette.

But whan she sigh there was no lette,
 That he mot nedés part her fro,
 She toke him in her armés two
 An hunderd times and gan him kisse
 And said: 'O, all my worlde's blisse,
 My trust, my lust, my life, min hele,
 To ben thin helpe in this quarele
 I pray unto the goddés alle.'

¹ *Weié*, protect.

And with that word she gan down
 falle

Of swoune, and he her uppé nam,
 And forth with that the maiden cam,
 And they to bed anone her brought,
 And thanné Jason her besought
 And to her saide in this manere:
 'My worthy lusty lady dere,
 Comfórteth you, for by my trouth
 It shall nought fallen in my slouth
 That I ne woll throughout fulfille
 Your hestés at your owné wille.
 And yet I hopé to you bringe
 Within a whilé such tidíngé,
 The which shall make us bothé
 game.'

"But for he woldé kepe her name,
 Whan that he wist it was nigh day,
 He saide, 'Adewe my sweté may.'
 And forth with him he nam his gere
 Which as she haddé take him there,
 And straught unto his chambre went
 And goth to bedde and slepe him
 hent¹

And lay that no man him awoke,
 For Hercules hede of him toke,
 Till it was underne² high and more.
 And than he gan to sighé sore
 And sodeinlich he braide of slepe,
 And they than token of him kepe;
 His chamberleins ben soné there
 And maden redy all his gere,
 And he arose and to the king
 He went and said how to that thing
 For which he cam he woldé go.
 The king therof was wonder wo
 And for he wolde him fain withdraw,
 He told him many a dredefull sawe.
 But Jason wolde it nought recorde
 And atté lasté they accorde.
 Whan that he woldé nought abide,
 A bote was redy atté tide,

¹ *Hent*, seized.

² *Underne*, time of a light refreshment between breakfast and dinner, or between dinner and supper.

In which this worthy knight of Grece,
Full arméd up at every piece
To his batailé which belongeth,
Toke ore in hond and sore him
longeth

Till he the water passéd were.

"Whan he cam to that ilé there,
He set him on his knees down
straught

And his carecte, as he was taught,
He rad and made his sacrifice
And sith anoint him in that wise
As Médeá him haddé bede ;
And than arose up fro that stede,
And with the glue the fire he queint ;
And anone after he atteint
The greté serpent and him slough.
But erst he haddé sorwe inough,
For that serpént made him travaile
So hard and sore of his bataile,
That now he stood and now he fell,
For longé time it so befell
That with his swerd and with his
spere •

He mighté nought that serpent dere,
He was so sherded¹ all aboute
It held all eggé tole² withoute,
He was so rude and hard of skin
There might no thingé go therein.
Venim and fire to-gider he cast,
That he Jasón so sore ablást
That if ne were his oignément,
His ring and his enchauntément,
Which Médeá toke him before,
He haddé with that worm be lore.³
But of vertú which therof cam
Jasón the dragon overcam
And he anone the teeth out drough
And set his oxen in his plough,
With which he brake a piece of lond
And sewe hem with his owné hond.
Tho might he great merveilé se,
Of every toth in his degré

Sprong up a knight with spere and
sheld,

Of which anone right in the feld
Echone slough other, and with that
Jason Medea not foryat,
On both his knees he gan down falle
And yaf thank to the goddés alle.
The flees he toke and goth to bote,
The sonné shineth bright and hote,
The flees of gold shone forth with
all,

The water glistred over all.
Medea wept and sighéd ofte
And stood upon a toure alofte ;
All privély within her selve,
There herd it nouthur ten ne twelve,
She praid and said : 'O, god him
spede,
The knight, which hath my maiden-
hede.'

And ay she loketh toward thile,
But whan she sigh within a while
The flees glistrénd ayein the sonne,
She said : 'Ha lord, now all is
wonne,

My knight the feld hath overcome,
Now woldé god, he weré come.
Ha lord, I wold he were alonde.'
But I dare také this on honde,
If that she haddé winges two,
She wold have flowe unto him tho
Straught there he was unto the bote.
The day was clere, the sonné hote,
The Gregois wéren in great doubt
The whilé that her lord was out,
They wisten nought what shuld
betide,

But waited ever upon the tide
To se what endé shuldé falle.
There stoden eke the nobles alle
Forth with the comunés of the town,
And as they loken up and down,
They weren ware within a throwe
Where cam the bote which they
wel knowe,

¹ Sherded, scaled. ² Egge tole, edge tools.
³ Lore, lost.

And sigh how Jason brought his prey.
 And tho they gonnén allé say¹
 And criden allé with o steven :¹
 'Ha, where was ever under the heven
 So noble a knight, as Jason is ?'
 And wel nigh allé saidén this,
 That Jason was a fairé knight,
 For it was never of mannés might
 The flees of gold so for to winne,
 And thus to tellen they beginne.
 With that the king cam forth anone
 And sigh the flees, how that it shone.
 And whan Jasón cam to the londe,
 The kinge him selvé toke his honde
 And kist him and great joy him
 made.
 The Gregois weren wonder glade
 And of that thing right merry hem
 thought
 And forth with hem the flees they
 brought,
 And eche on other gan to ligh.²
 But wel was him that mighté nigh
 To se there of the propreté,
 And thus they passen the citee
 And gone unto the paleis straught.
 " Medea, which foryat her
 nought,
 Was redy there and said anon :
 ' Welcome, O worthy knight Jasón !'
 She wolde have kist him wonder fain,
 But shamé tornéd her ayein,
 It was nought the manere as tho,³
 Forthý she dorsté nought do so.
 She toke her leve, and Jason went
 Into his chambre and she him sent
 Her maiden to sene how he ferde.
 The which whan that she sigh and
 herde,
 How that he haddé faren out
 And that it stood well all about,
 She toide her lady what she wist,
 And she for joy her maiden kist.

¹ Steven, voice.² Ligh, laugh.³ Tho, then.

The bathés weren than araied
 With herbés tempred and assaied
 And Jason was unarméd sone
 And dide as it befell to done ;
 Into his bathe he went anone
 And wisshe him clene as any bone,
 He toke a soppe and out he cam
 And on his best array he nam
 And kempt his hede whan he was
 clad,
 And goth him forth all merry and
 glad
 Right straught into the kingés halle.
 The king cam with his knightés alle
 And maden him glad welcoming.
 And he hem toldé tho tiding
 Of this and that, how it befell,
 Whan that he wan the shepés fell.
 Medea whan she was asent¹
 Come soné to that parlément,¹
 And whan she mighte Jason se,
 Was none so glad of all as she.
 There was no joié for to seche,
 Of him made every man a speche,
 Some mans said oné, some said other,
 But though he weré goddés brother
 And mighté maké fire and thonder,
 There mighté be no moré wonder
 Than was of him in that citee.
 Echone taught other ' This is he
 Whiche hath in his powér withinne
 That all the world ne mighté winne !
 Lo, here the best of allé good !'
 Thus saidén they, that theré stood
 And eke that walkéd up and down
 Both of the court and of the town.
 " The time of souper cam anon,
 They wisshén and therto they gon ;
 Medea was with Jason set,
 Tho was there many a deinté fet
 And set to-fore hem on the bord,
 But none so liking as the word
 Which was there spoke among hem

two,

¹ Asent, sent for.

So as they dorsté speké tho.
But though they hadden litel space,
Yet they accorden in that place
How Jason shuldé come at night,
Whan every torche and every light
Were out, and than of other thinges
They speke aloud for súpposínges
Of hem that stoden there aboute,
For love is evermore in doubte,
If that it be wisly govérned
Of hem that ben of lové kérned.
Whan al was done, that dissh and
cup

And cloth and bord and all was up,
They waken while hem list to wake,
And after that they levé take
And gon to beddé for to reste.
And whan him thoughté for the
beste,

That every man was fast a slepe,
Jasón, that wolde his timé kepe,
Goth forth stalkénd all privély
Unto the chambre and redely
There was a maidé, which him kept,
Medea woke and no thing slept,
So that they hadden joy inow.
And tho they setten whan and how
That she with him away shal stele,
With wordés such and other felse.¹
Whan all was treted to an ende,
Jasón toke leve and gan forth wende
Unto his owné chambre in pees.
There wist it non but Hercules.

"He slept and 105, whan it was
time,

And whan it fel towardés prime,
He toke to him such as he triste
In secré, that none other wiste,
And told hem of his counseil there
And saidé that his willé were,
That they to ship had allé thing
So privelich in thevening,
That no man might her² dede aspice
But tho that were of compaignie,

¹ Felse, many.

² Her, their.

For he woll go withouté leve
And lenger woll he nought beleve,¹
But he ne wolde at thilké throwe
The king or quené shulde it knowe.
They said, all this shall well be do.
And Jason trusté well therto.

"Medea in the mené while,
Which thought her fader to beguile,
The tresor which her fader hadde
With her all privély she ladde
And with Jasón at timé set
Away she stale and found no let
And straught she goth her into ship
Of Grecé with that felaship.
And theyanone drough up the saile,
And all that night this was counseil;
But erly whan the sonné shone
Men sigh how that they weré gone
And come unto the kinge and tolde.
And he the sothé knowé wolde
And axeth, where his doughter was.
There was no word, but 'Out alas,
She was ago.'² The moder wept,
The fader as a wodeman lept
And gan the timé for to warie³
And swore his othe he wold nought
taric,

That with galiote and with galéy
The samé cours the samé wey
Which Jason toke he woldé take,
If that he might him overtake.
To this they saiden allé ye.
Anone as they were atté see
And all as who saith at one wordé,
They gone withinné shippés borde,
The sail goth up, and forth they
straught,

But none exploit therof they caught,
And so they tornen home ayein,
For all that labour was in vein.
Jasón to Grecé with his pray
Goth through the see the righté
way.

¹ Beleve, remain.

² Ago, gone.

³ Warie, curse

Whan he there come and men it
tolde,

They maden joïe yong and olde.

"Eson whan that he wist of this,
How that his soné comen is
And hath achevéd that he sought
And home with him Medea brought,
In all the widé world was none
So glad a man as he was one.
To-gider ben these lovers tho,
Till that they hadden sonés two
Wherof they weren bothé glade,
And olde Eson great joïe made
To seen thencrees of his lignage,
For he was of so great an age
That men awaiten every day
Whan that he shuldé gone away.
Jasón, which sigh his fader olde,
Upon Medea made him bolde
Of art magiqué which she couth,
And praïeth her that his faders
youth

She woldé make ayeinward newe.
And she that was towárd him trewe
Behight him that she wolde it do,
Whan that she timé sigh therto.
But what she did in that matére
It is a wonder thing to here,
But yet for the novellérie
I thenké telle a great partie.

"Thus it befell upon a night,
Whan there was nought but sterré
light,

She was vanisshe right as her list,
That no wight but her self it wist.
And that was atté midnight tide ;
The world was still on every side,
With open hede and foot all bare
Her hair to-sprad she gan to fare,
Upon her clothés gert she was
All spechéls and on the gras
She glode forth as an adder doth.
None other wisé she ne goth,
Till she came to the fresshé flood,
And there a whilé she withstood,

Thriés she tornéd her aboute
And thriés eke she gan down loute,
And in the flood she wete her hair,
And thriés on the water there
Shégaspeth with a drecchingonde¹
And tho she toke her speche on
honde.

Firist she began to clepe and calle
Upwárde unto the sterrés alle,
To winde, to air, to see, to londe
She preide and eke helde up her
honde

To Échatés and gan to crie,
Whiche is goddess of sorcerie,
She saidé, 'Helpeth at this nede,
And as ye maden me to spede
Whan Jason came the flees to seche,
So help me now, I you beseche !'
With that she loketh and was ware,
Downfro the sky there came a charç,
The which dragóns abouté drowe.
And thoshe gan her hededown bowe
And up she stighe and faire and well
She drové forth by chare and wheel
Above in thaire among the skies ;
The londe of Crete in tho parties
She sought, and fasté gan her hie,
And therupon the hullés high
Of Othrin and Olimpe also
And eke of other hullés mo
She founde and gadreth herbés
suote,

She pulleth up some by the roté
And many with a knife she shereth
And all into her char she bereth.
Thus whan she hath the hullés
sought,

The floodés therefor yate she nought
Eridian and Amphrisos,
P'eneie and eke Spercheïdos,
To hem she went and there she
nome

Both of the water and of the fome,
The sonde and eke the smallé stones

¹ *Drecching onde*, troubled breath.

Whiche as she chese out for the
nones,

And of the Reddé See a part
That was behovelich to her art
She toke, and after that about
She soughte sondry sedés out
In feldés and in many greves
And eke a part she toke of leves.
But thing which might her most
availe

She found in Crete and in Thessaile.
In daies and in nightés nine,
With great travaile and with great
peine

She was purveyed of every piece
And torneth homward into Grece.
Before the gatés of Eson
Her chare she let away to gone
And toke out first that was therinne,
For tho she thoughte to beginne
Such thing as semeth impossible
And made her selven invisible,
As she that was with thaire enclosed
And might of no man be desclosed.
She toke up turvés of the londe
Withouté helpe of mannés honde
And heled¹ with the grené gras,
Of whiche an alter made there was
Unto Echates the goddessse
Of art magique and the maistresse.
And este an other to invent,
As she which did her hole intent,
Tho toke she feldwode² and ver-
veine,

Of herbés ben nought better tweine,
Of which anone withouté let
These alters ben abouté set.
Two sondry pittés fasté by
She made, and with that hastély
A wether which was black she
slough,

And out therof the blood shedrough
And did into the pittés two,
Warm milk she put also therto

¹ Heled, covered.

² Felwood, gentian.

With hony meind,¹ and in such wise
She gan to make her sacrifice
And cried and praidé forth withall
To Pluto the god infernál
And to the quené Proserpine.
And so she sought out all the line
Of hem that longen to that craft,
Behindé was no namé last,
And praid hemall, as she well couth,
To graunt Esón his firsté youth.
This olde Esón brought forth was
tho ;²

Away she bad all other go
Upon períl that mighté falle,
And with that word they wenten alle
And left hem theré two alone.
And tho she gan to gaspe and gone
And madé signés many one
And said her wordés therupon,
And with spellinge and her charmes
She toke Esón in both her armes
And made him for to slepé fast
And him upon her herbés cast.
The blacké wether tho she toke
And hew the flesshe as doth a coke,
On either alter part she laide,
And with the charmes that she saide
A fire down fro the sky alight
And made it for to brenné light.
And whan Medea sigh it brenne,
Anone she gan to sterte and renne
The fry alters all about.

There was no besté which goth out
More wildé than she semeth there.
Aboute her shulders heng her hair
As though she were oute of her minde
And tornéd to another kinde.
Tho lay there certain wodé cleft
Of which the pieces now and eft
She made hem in the pittés wete
And put hem in the fry hete
And toke the bronde with all the
blase

And thriés she began to rase

¹ Meind, mixed.

² Tho, then.

About Esón there as he slept.
And eft with water which she kept
She made a cercle about him thries
And eft with fire of sulphre twies
Full many another thing she dede,
Whiche is nought writen in the
stede.

But tho she ran so up and doune
She madé many a wonder souné,
Somtime lich unto the cock,
Somtime unto the laverock,
Somtime caceth as an hen,
Somtime spekeþ as don men.
And right so as her jargon straungeth
In sondry wise her formé chaungeth,
She semeth faire and no womán,
For with the craftés that she can
She was as who sauth a goddésse,
And what her listé more or lesse
She did, in bokés as we finde,
That passeth over mannés kinde.
But who that woll of wonders here,
What thing she wrought in this
mitere

To make an ende of that she gan,
Such merveil herdé never man.

"Appointed in the newé mone,
Whan it was timé for to done,
She set a caldron on the fire,
In which was al the hole attire
Whereon the mediciné stood,
Of juse, of water, and of blood,
And let it boile in suche a plite
Till that she sigh the spumé white.
And tho she cast in rinde and rote
And sede and floure that was for
bote,

With many an herbe and many a
stone

Wherof she hath there many one.
And eke Cimpheíús, the serpént,
To her hath all her scalés lent,
Chelidre her yafe her adders skin,
And she to boilen cast hem in,
And parte eke of the hornéd oule,

The which men here on nightés
houle,

And of a raven which was tolde
Of niné hundred winter olde
She toke the hede with all the bille.
And as the medicíne it wille
She toke her after the bowele
Of the seewolf and for the hele
Of Eson, with a thousand mo
Of thingés that she haddé tho.
In that caldrón to-gider as blive
She put and toke than of olíve
A drié braunche hem with to stere.¹
The which anon gan floure and bere
And waxe all fresshe and grene
ayein.

Whan she this vertue haddé sene,
She let the leesté droppe of alle
Upon the baré floure² down falle :
Anon there sprong up floure and gras
Where as the droppé fallen was,
And waxe anone all medow grene
So that it mighté well be sene.
Medea thanné knewe and wist
Her medicíne is for to trist³
And goth to Eson there he lay
And toke a swerd was of assay.
With which a wounde upon his side
She madé, that there out may slide
The blood withinné which was olde
And sike and trouble and feble and
colde.

And tho she toke unto his use
Of herbés all the besté juse
And poured it into his wounde,
That made his veinés full and sounde.
And tho she made his woundés close,
And toke his honde, and up he rose.
And tho she yaf him drinke a
draught

Of hede, his youth ayein he caught,
His hiche, his herte and his viságe
Lich unto twenty winter age,

¹ Stere, stir. ² Baré floure, bare ground.
³ To trist, to be trusted.

His horé hairés were away,
And lich unto the fresshé May
Whan passéd ben the coldé shoures,
Right so recovereth he his floures.

“Lo, what might any mandeise
A woman shewe in any wise
More hertely love in any stede
Than Medea to Jason dede.
First she made him the flees to winne,
And after that fro kith and kenne
With great tresór with him she stale,
And to his fader forth with all
His elde hath tornéd into youthe,
Which thing none other woman
couthe.

But how it was to her aquit,
The rémembraunce dwelleth yit.

King Peleús his eme was dede,
Jason bare croune upon his hede,
Medea hath fulfilled his will,
But whan he shuld of right fulfill
The trothé which to her afore
He had in thile of Colchos swore,
Tho was Medea most deceived.
For he an other hath received
Which doughter was to king Creon,
Creusa she hight, and thus Jason,
As he that was to love untrewé,
Medea left and toke a newe;
But that was after sone abought.¹
Medea with her art hath wrought
Of cloth of golde a mantel riche,
Which semeth worth a kingés riche,²
And that was unto Creusa sent
In name of yest and of présent,
For susterhode hem was betwene.
And whan that yongé fresshé quene
That mantel lappéd her aboute,
Anon therof the fire sprang oute
And brent her bothé flesshe and bon.
Tho cam Medea to Jason
With both his sonés on her honde
And said, ‘O thou of every londe
The most untrewé créature,

¹ Abought, paid for.

² Riche, kingdom.

Lo, this shall be thy forfeiture.’
With that she both his sonés slough
Before his eye, and he out drough
His swerd and wold have slain her
tho,—

But faréwell, she was ago
Unto Pallas the court above,
Where as she pleigneth upon love,
As she that was with that goddesse,
And he was lefte in great distresse.

“Thus might thou se, what sorwe
it doth
To swere an oth, which is nought
soth,

In Lovés causé namély.
My soné, be well ware forthý
And kepe that thou be nought for-
swore.

For this, whiche I have told to-fore,
Ovidé telleth every dele.”—

“My fader, I may leve it wele,
For I have herde it ofté say,
How Jason toke the flees away
Fro Colchos, but yet herde I nought,
By whom it was first thider brought.
And for it weré good to here,
If that you list at my praiere
To telle I woldé you beseche.”—

“My soné, who that wold it seche,
In bokés he may finde it write.
And nethéles, if thou wolt wite
In the manér as thou hast preide,
I shall the tell, how it is saide.

The fame of thilké shepés felle
Whiche in Colchos, as it befelle,
Was all of gold, shal never deie,
Wherof I thinké for to say,
Howe it cam first into that ile.
There was a king in thilké while
Towardés Grece, and Athemas
The cronique of his namé was.
And had a wif, which Philen hight,
By whom, so as Fortúne it dight,
He had of children yongé two.

Frixus the firsté was of tho,

A knavé¹ child right faire with all.
 A doughter eke the which men call
 Hellen, he haddé by his wife.
 But for there may no mannés life
 Endure upon this erthé here,
 This worthy quene, as thou might
 here,

Er that the children were of age,
 Toke of her endé the passagc
 With great worshíp and was be-
 grave:²

What thing it liketh God to have
 It is great reson to ben his.
 Forthý this king, so as it is,
 With great suffránce it under-
 fongeth.

And afterward, as him belongeth,
 Whan it was timé for to wedde,
 A newé wife he toke to bedde,
 Whiche Yno hight and was a maide
 And eke the doughter as men saide
 Of Cadmé, whiche a king also
 Was holde in thilké daies tho.

Whan Yno was the kingés make
 She cast how that she mighté make
 These children to her fader loth
 And shope a wile ayein hem both,
 Which to the king was all unknowe.
 A yere or two she let do sowe
 The lond with sodé whete aboute,
 Wherof no corn may springen oute.
 And thus by sleight and by covine
 Aros the derth and the famine
 Throughout thelonde in such a wise,
 So that the king a sacrifice
 Upon the point of this distresse
 To Ceres, which is the goddesse
 Of corne, hath shape him for to yive,
 To loke, if it may be foryive
 Themischefewhich was in his londe.
 But she, which knewe to-fore the
 honde³

The circumstance of all this thing,

Ayein the coming of the king
 Into the temple hath shape so
 Of her accord, that allé tho
 Which of the temple prestés were,
 Have said and full declared there
 Unto the king, but if so be
 That he deliver the contré
 Of Fixus and of Hellen bothe,
 With whom the goddés ben so
 wrothe

That while the children ben with-
 inne

Such tilthé shall no man beginne
 Wherof to get him any corne;
 Thus was it said, thus was it sworne
 Of all the prestés that there are.
 And she which causeth all this fare,
 Said eke thertowhat that shewolde.
 And every man than after tolde
 So as the quené had hem preide.

“The king, which hath his cré
 leide

And leveth¹ all that ever he herde,
 Unto her talés thus answerde
 And saith, that lever him is to chese
 His children bothé for to lese
 Than him and all the remenaunt
 Of hem which are appertenaunt
 Unto the lond whiche he shall kepe.
 And bade his wifé to take kepe
 In what manére is best to done,
 That they deliveréd were sone
 Out of this worlde. And she anone
 Two men ordeineth for to gone,
 But first she made hem for to swere
 That they the children shuldé bere
 Unto the see, that none it knowe,
 And hem therinné bothé throwe.
 The children to the see ben lad,
 Where in the wise as Yno bad
 These men be redy for to do,
 But the goddésé which Juno
 Is hote appereth in the stede
 And hath unto the men forbede

¹ *Knave*, boy.

² *Begrave*, buried.

³ *To fore the honde*, beforehand.

¹ *Leveth*, believes.

That they the children nought ne
slee,

But bad hem loke into the see
And taken hede of that they sighen,
Ther swam a shepeto-fore here yen,
Whose flees of burnéd gold was all.
And this goddésse forth with all
Commaundeth that withoute let
They shulde anon the children set
Above upon the shepés back.
And all was do, right as she spak,
Wherof the men gone home ayein.

“And fell so, as the bokés sain,
Hellen the yongé maiden tho,
Whiche of the seë was wo bego,
For puré drede her hert hath lore,
That fro the shepe which hath her
bore,

As she that was swouné dé feint,
She fell and hath her self adreint.
With Frixus and this shepe forth
swam,

Till he to thile of Colchos cam,
Where Juno the goddésse he fonde,
Which toke the shepe unto the londe
And set it there in such a wise,
As thou to-fore hast herd devise,
Wherof cam after all the wo,
Why Jason was forsworé so
Unto Medee, as it is spoke.”—

“My fader, who that hath to-broke
His trouth, as ye have tolde above,
He is nought worthy for to love
Ne be belovéd, as me semeth.
But every newé lové quemeth
To him that newé fangel is.
And nethéles now after this,
If that you list to taken hede
Upon my shrifté to procede
In Lovés cause ayein the Vice
Of Covetise and Avarice,
What there is more I woldé wite.”—

“My soné, this I findé write,
There is yet one of thilké brood,
Which only for the worldés good

To make a tresor of monéy
Put allé consciéce away.
Wherof in thy confessión
The name and the condición
I shall here afterward declare,
Which maketh one riche an other
bare.

Upon the bench sitténd on high
With Avarice Usure I sigh,
Ful clothéd of his owné suite,
Which after gold maketh chase and
suite
With his brocoúrs, that renne aboute
Liche unto racches¹ in a route.
Such lucre is none above groundé,
Which is nought of tho racchés
founde.

For where they se beyeté sterte,
That shall hem in no wise asterte
But they it drive into the net
Of lucre, whiche Usúre hath set.

Usúré with the riché dwelleth,
To all that ever he bieth and selleth
He hath ordeiné of his sleight
Mesuré double and double weight.
Outwárd he selleth by the lasse
And with the more he maketh his
tasse,²

Wherof his hous is full withinne.
He recheth nought be so he winne,
Though that there lesé ten or twelve.
His love is all toward him selve
And to none other but he se
That he may winné suché thre.
For where he shallought yive or lene
He woll ayeinward take a bene
There he hath lent the smallé pèse.³
And right so there ben many of these
Lovers, that though they love a lite⁴
That scarsly wolde it weie a mite,
Yet wol they have a pound ayein,
As doth Usúre in his baigain.

¹ *Racches*, scenting hounds.

² *Tasse*, heap.

³ Will take a bean where he has lent a pea.

⁴ *Lite*, little.

But certes such Usure unliche
It falleth more unto the riche
Als well of love as of beyete
Than unto hem that ben nought
grete,
And as who saith ben simple and
pouer ;

For selden is whan they recouer
* But if it be through great deserte,
And nethéles men se pouerte
With pursuít of contenance¹
Full ofté make a great chevaúnce
And take of love his avauntáge
Forth with the helpe of his brocáge
That maken semewhere it is nought.
And thus full ofté is lové bought
For litel what, and mochel take
With falsé weightés that they make.

" Now sone, of that I saide above
Thou wost what Usure is of Love.
Tell me forthy what so thou wilt,
If thou therof hast any gilt ?"—

" My fader nay, for ought I here.
For of the points ye tolden here
I will you by my trouthe assure,
My weight of love and my mesure
Hath be moie large and more cer-
teine

Than ever I toke of love ayeine.
For so yet couthe I never of sleighte
To take ayein by double weighte
Of lové more than I have yive.
For also wis mote I be shrive
And have remission of sinne,
And so yet couth I never winne
Ne yet so mochel soth to sain,
That ever I might have half ayein
Of so full love as I have lent.

And if mine hap were so well went,
That for the hole I might have half,
Me thenketh I were a goddes half.
For where Usuré wold have double,
My conscience is nought so trouble,

¹ Pursuít of contenance, continued per-
severance.

I biddé never as to my dele
But of the hole an halven dele.
That is none éxcess as me thenketh,
But nethéles it me forthenketh.
For well I wot that wol nought be,
For every day the better I se
That how so ever I yive or lene
My love in placé that I mene,
For ought that ever I axe or crave
I can nothing ayeinwarde have.
But yet for that I wol nought lete
What so befall of my beyete,
That I ne shall her yive and lene
My love and all my thought soclene,
That toward me shall nought be-
leve.¹

And if she of her godé leve
Rewardé wol me nought ayein,
I wot the last of my bargein
Shall stonde upon so great a lost,
That I may never more the cost
Recouer in this world till I deie,
So that touchénd of this partie
I may me well excuse and shall ;
And for to speké forth withall,
If any brocour for me went
That point come never in minentent,
So that the moré me mervesleth
What thing it is my lady eileth,
That all min herte and all my timé
She hath, and do no better by me.

" I have herd said, that thought
is free

And nethéles in priveté
To you, my fader, that bene here
Min holé shrifté for to here,
I dare min herté well disclose
Touchénd Usúrie, as I suppose,
Whiche, as ye telle, in love is used.
My lady may nought ben excused
That for o loking of her eye
Min holé herté till I deie
With all that ever I may and can
She hath me wonné to her man,

¹ Believe, remain.

Wherof me thenketh good reson
wolde

That she somdele rewardé sholde,
And yive a part there she hath all.
I not what falle hereafter shall,
But into now yet dare I sain
Her listé never yive ayein
A goodly word in such a wise
Wherof min hopé might arise
My greté love to recompense.
I not how she her consciéce
Excusé wol of this Usúre
By largé weight and great mesure.
She hath mylove and I have nought
Of that which I have dere abought,
And with min herté I have it paide,
But all this is asidé laide,
And I go lovélés aboute.
Her oughté stonde in full great
doubte,

Till she redressé suche a sinne
That she wol al my lové winne
And yiveth me nought to livé by.
Noughtal so moch as 'grauntmercy'
Her list to say, of which I might
Some of my greté peine alight.
But of this point, lo, thus I fare,
As he that paieth for his chaffare
And bieth it dere and yet hath none,
So mote he nedés pouer gone.
Thus bie I dere and have no love,
That I ne may nought come above
To winne of lové none encrese.
But I me willé nethélese
Touchend Usúre of love aquite,
And if my lady be to wite¹
I pray to God such grace her sende
That she by time it mot amende."—

"My sone, of that thou hast an-
swérde

Touchend Usure I have al herde,
How thou of love hast wonné smale.
But that thou tellest in thy tale
And thy lady therof accusest,

¹ To witte, to blame.

Me thenketh tho wordes thou mis-
usest.

For by thin owné knouleching
Thou saist, how she for one loking
Thy holé hert fro the she toke,
She may be such that her o loke
Is worth thine herté many folde,
So hast thou well thin herté solde
Whan thou hast that is moré
worthe.

And eke of that thou tellest forthe,
How that her weight of love uneven
Is unto thine, under the heaven
Stood never in even that balaunce
Which stont in lovés governaunce.
Such is the statute of his lawe,
That though thy lové moré drawe
And peise in the balauncé more,
Thou might nought axe ayein ther-
fore

Of dúcté, but all of grace.
For Love is Lorde in every place,
There may no lawe him justify,
By reddour ne by compaigny¹
That he ne wol, after his wille,
Whom that him liketh spede or
spille.

To love a man may well beginne,
But whether he shall lese or winne
That wot no man, til atté last.
Forthy coveité nought to fast,
My soné, but abide thin ende,
Parcas all may to goodé wende.
But that thou hast me tolde and
saide

Of o thing I am right well paide,
That thou by sleighté ne by guile
Of no brocouér hast otherwhile
Engnéd love, for suché dede
Is soré vengéd as I rede.

"Broccours of lové, that deceiven,
No wonder is though they receiven
After the wrong that they deserven,
For whom as ever that they serven

¹ By force or fellowship.

And do plesauncé for a while,
Yet atté last her owné guile
Upon her owné hede descendeth,
Which God of his vengeauncé
sendeth.

As by ensample of time ago
A man may finde it hath be so.

"*It fell some time*, as it was
sene,

The highé goddesse and the quene
Juno tho had in compaigny
A maiden full of trechery.
For she was ever in accorde
With Jupiter, that was her lorde,
To get him other lovés newe
Through such brocagé, and was
untrewe

All other wisé than him nedeth.
But she, the which noshamédredeth,
With queinté wordés and with slie
Blent in such wise her ladies eye
As she to whom that Juno trist,
So that therof she nothing wist.
But so privé may be nothing,
That it ne cometh to knouleching,
Thing done upon the derké night
Is after knowe on daiés light.
So it befell, that atté last
All that this slighé maiden cast
Was overcast and overthrowe.
For as the sothé mot be knowe,
To Juno it was done understonde,
In what manére her husébonde
With fals brocagé hath take usure
Of lové more than his mesure,
Whan he toke other than his wife ;
Wherof this maiden was giltife,
Whiche haddé ben of his assent.
And thus was all the gamé shent.
She suffred him, as she mot nede,
But the brocour of his misdede,
She which her counseil yaf therto,
On her is the vengeauncé do ;
For Juno with her wordes hote
This maiden, which Eccho was hote,

Reproveth and saith in this wise :

'O traiteresse, of which service
Hast thou thin owné lady served,
Thou hast great painé well deserved
That thou canst maken it so queint.
Thy slighé wordés for to peint
Towardés me that am thy quene,
Wherof thou madest me to wene,
That my husbondé trewé were
Whan that he loveth ellés where
All be it so him nedeth nought.
But upon the it shall be bought
Whiche art privé to tho doínges,
And me full ofte of thy lesínges
Deceivéd hast. Nowe is the day,
That I thy wilé quité may,
And for thou hast to me conceled
That my lorde hath with other deled,
I shall the sette in suche a kinde
That ever unto the worldés ende
All that thou herest thou shalt telle
And clappe it out as doth a belle.
And with that word she was for-
shape,

There may no vois her mouthe es-
cape :

What man that in the wodés crieth,
Withouten faile Ecchó replieth ;
And what word that him lust to sain,
The samé word she saith aycin.
Thus she, which whilome haddé leve
To dwelle in chambre, mot beleve.¹
In wodés and on hillés both,
For such brocagé as wives loth,
Which doth her lordés hertés
chaunge

And love in other places straunge.

"Forthý if ever it so befallé
That thou, my sone, amongés alle
Bewedded man, hold that thou hast,
For than all other love is waste ;
O wife shal wel to the suffice,
And than if thou for covetise
Of lové woldest axé more,

¹ *Beleve*, remain.

Thou shuldest don ayein the lore
Of alle hem that trewé be.”—

“My fader, as in this degré
My consciéce is nought accused,
For I no such brocage have used
Wherof that lust of love is wonne.
Forthý speke forth, as ye begonne,
Of Avarice upon my shrifte.”—

“My sone, I shall the braunches
shifte

By order so as they ben set,
On whom no good is wel beset.

Blind Avarice of his lignage
For counseil and for cousinage
To be witholde ayein Largesse
Hath one, whose name is said

Scarsnesse,
The which is keper of his hous
And is so throughout avarous,
That he no good let out of honde;
Though God him self it woldéfonde,
Of yifté shuld he no thing have.
And if a man it woldé crave,
He musté thapné failé nede
Where God him selvé may nought
spede.

And thus Scarsnésse in every place
By reson may no thank purcháce.
And nethéles in his degré
Above all other most privé
With Avaricé stant he this.
For he govérneth that there is
In eche estate of his office
After the reule of thilké vice
He taketh, he kepeth, he halt, he
bint,

That lighter is to fle¹ the flint
Than gete of him in hard or neisshe
Only the value of a reisshe
Of good in helping of an other,
Nought though it were his owné
brother.

For in the cas of yift and lone
Stant every man for him alone.

¹ Fle, flay.

Him thenketh, of his unkindship,
That him nedéth no felaship
Be so the bagge and he accorden,
Him reccheth nought what men
recorden

Of him, or be it evil or good,
For all his truste is on his good;
So that alone he falleth ofte,
Whan he best weneth stonde alofte,
Als well in love as other wise.
For love is ever of some reprise
To him that woll his lové holde.
Forthý my sone, as thou art holde
Touchend of this tell me thy shrifte,
Hast thou be scarce or large of yifte
Unto thy lové, whom thou servest.
For after that thou well deservest
Of yifté, thou might be the bet.
For that good holde I well beset
For which thou might the betterfare,
Than is no wisdom for to spare.
For thus men sain in every nede,
He was wise that first madé mede.
For where as medé may nought
spede,

I not what helpeth other dede.
Full ofte he faileth of his game,
That will with idel¹ hond reclame
His hawke, as many a nicé doth.
Forthý my soné, tell me soth
And say the trouth, if thou hast be
Unto thy love or scarce or fre?”—

“My fader, it hath stondé thus,
That if the tresor of Cresús
And all the golde of Octavien,
Forth with the richesse of Yndien
Of perlés and of riché stones
Were all to-gider min at ones,
I set it at no more accompt
Than wolde a baré straw amount
To yive it her all in a day,
Be so that to that sweté may
It mighté like or more or lesse.
And thus because of my scarsnesse

¹ Idél, empty.

Ye may well understand and leve
That I shall nought the worse.
acheve

The purpos which is in my thought,
But yet I yaf her never nought
Ne therto durst a profre make.
For well I wot she woll nought take,
And yive woll she nought also,
She is escheue of bothé two.
And this I trowé be the skill
Towardés me, for she ne will
That I have any cause of hope,
Nought al so mochel as a drope.
But toward other as I may se
She taketh and yiveth insuch degré,
That as by wey of frendelyhede
She can so kepe her womanhede
That everyman speketh of her wele.
But she wol take of me no dele,
And yet she wot wel that I wolde
Yive and do bothé what I sholde
To plesen her in all my might,
By reson this wote every wight.
For that may by no wey asterte,
There she is maister of the herte
She mot be maister of the good.
For god wot wel that all my mood
And all min herte and all my thought
And all my good while I have ought,
Als frely as God hath it yive,
It shall be hers, the while I live,
Right as her list herself commaunde.
So that it nedeth no demaunde
To axe me if I have be scarce
To lové, for as to tho parse¹
I will answeren and say no.”—

“My soné, that is right well do.
For often timés of scarsnesse
It hath ben seen, that for the lesse
Is lost the more, as thou shalt here
A talé, lich to this matere.

Scarsnesse and Love accor-
den never,
For every thing is wel the lever

¹ *The parse*, those charms.

Whan that a man hath bought it
dere,

And for to speke in this matere
For sparing of a litel cost
Full ofté time a man hath lost
The largé coté for the hood.
What man that scarce is of his good
And wolnought yive, heshall nought
take,

With yift a man may undertake
The highé God to plesé and queme,
With yifta man the world may deme.
For every creäturé bore
If thou him yive is glad therfore,
And every gladship, as I finde,
Is comfort unto lovés kinde
And causeth ofte a man to spede ;
So was he wise that first yaf mede.
For Medé kepeth Love in hous,
But where the men ben coveitous
And sparen for to yive a parte,
They knowen nought Cupidé’s arte.
For his fortune and his apprise
Disdeigneth allé covetise
And hateth allé nigardie.

And for to loke of this partie
A sothe ensample, howe it is so,
I findé write of Babio,
Which had a love at his ménage,
There was no fairer of her age
And highte Viola by name,
Which full of youth and full of game
Was of her selfe and large and free.
But such an other chinche¹ as he
Men wisten nought in all the londe,
And had affaited to his honde
His servant, the which Spodius
Was hote. And in this wisé thus
The worldés good oi suffisaunce
Was had, but liking and plesaunce
Of that belongeth to richésse
Of lové stode in great distresse,
So that this yongé lusty wight
Of thing which fell to lovés right .

¹ *Chinche*, miser.

Was evil servéd over all,
 That she was wo bego withall.
 Til that Cupide and Venus eke
 A medicné for the seke
 Ordeiné wolden in this cas ;
 So as fortuné thanné was
 Of love upon the destiné
 It fell right as it shulde be.
 A fresshe, a free, a frendly man,
 That nought of Avaricé can,
 Which Croceús by namé hight,
 Toward this sweté cast his sight
 And there she was cam in presence ;
 She sigh him large of his despense
 And amorous and glad of chere,
 So that her liketh well to here
 The goodly wordés which he saide,
 And therupon of love he praide.
 Of lové was all that he ment,
 To love and for she shulde assent
 He yaf her yiftés ever among.
 But for men sain that 'Mede is
 strong'

It was well sene at thilké tide,
 For as it shulde of right betide
 This Viola largesse hath take
 And the nigárd she hath forsake.
 Of Babio she will no more,
 For he was grucchend evermore,
 There was with him none other fare,
 But for to pinche and for to spare,
 Of worldés muck to get encres.
 So goth the wrecché lovéles
 Bejapéd for his Scarsité :
 And he that largé was and fre
 And set his herté to despense,
 This Croceús his bowé bende
 Which Venus toke him for to holde,
 And shot as ofte as ever he wolde.

"Lo, thus departeth love his lawe,
 That what man woll nought be
 felawe

To yive and spende, as I the telle,
 He is nought worthy for to dwelle
 In Lovés Court to be relieved.

Forthy my sone, if I be leved,
 Thou shalt be large of thy de-
 spense."—

"My fader, in my consciéce
 If there be any thing amis,
 I wolde amende it after this
 Toward my lové namély."—

"My soné, well and redély
 Thou saist, so that well paid withall
 I am, and further if I shall
 Unto thy shrifté specifie
 Of Avarice the progenie,
 What Vicé sueth after this,
 Thou shalt have wonder how it is
 Among the folke in any regne,
 That such a Vicé mighté regne,
 Whiche is comúne at all assaies,
 As men may findé now a daies.

The Vicé like unto the Fende,
 Which never yet was mannés frende,
 And clepéd is Unkindéship,
 Of covine and of felaship
 With Avarice he is witholde.
 Him thenketh he shuld nought ben
 holde

Unto the moder which him bare.
 Of him may never man beware,
 He wol nought knowé the merite
 For that he wolde it nought aquite,
 Which in this worlde is mochelused,
 And fewé ben therof excused.
 To tell of him is endéles,
 But thus I saie nethéles,
 Where as this Vicé cometh to londe
 There taketh no man his thanke
 on honde ;

Though he with all his mightés
 serve

He shall of him no thank deserve ;
 He taketh what any man will yive
 But while he hath o day to live
 He wol no thing rewardé ayein,
 He gruccheth for to yive o grein
 Where he hath take a berné full.
 That maketh a kindé herté dull,

To set his trust in such frendshíp
There as he fínt no kindeshíp.
And for to speké wordés pleine,
Thus here I many a man com-
pleigne

That nowe on daíes thou shalt finde
At nedé fewé frendés kinde.
What thou hast done for hem to-
fore

It is foryeten as it were lore.¹
The bokés spoken of this Vice
And telle how God of his justice
By way of kinde, and eke natúre
And every liflich creäture,
The lawe also, who that it can,
They dampnen an unkindé man.

“It is all one, to say Unkinde
Asthing which done is ayein Kinde,²
For it with Kindé never stood
A man to yelden evil for good.
For who that woldé taken hede,
A beste is glad of a good dede
And loveth thilké creäture
After the lawe of his natúre
And doth him ese. And for to se
Of this matere auctorité,
Full ofté time it hath befallé;
Wherof a tale amongés alle,
Which is of olde ensamplarie,
I thenké for to specifie.

To speke of an unkindé man
I finde, how whilome Adrian
Of Romé, which a great lorde was,
Upon a day as he par cas
To wodé in his hunting went,
It hapneth at a sodein went,
After the chase as he pursueth,
Through happé, which no man
escheueth,
He felle unware into a pit,
Where that it mighté nought be let.
The pit was depe, and he fell lowe,
That of his men none mighté knowe
Where he became, for none was nigh

Which of his fall the mischefe sigh.
And thus aloné there he lay
Clepende and criend all the day
For socoure and deliverance,
Till ayein eve it fell per chance,
A while er it began to night,
A pouer man which Bardus hight
Cam forthé walkend with his asse
And haddé gadered him a tasse¹
Of grené stickés and of drie
To sellé whom that wolde hem bie,
As he which had no livélode
But whan he mighté suche a lode
To towné with his assé carie.
And as it fel him for to tarie
That ilké timé nigh the pit
And hath the trussé fasté knit,
He herde a vois, which criéd dimme,
And he his eré to the brimme
Hath leide and herde it was a man,
Which saide, ‘O helpe here Adrian,
And I will yivé half my good!’
The pouer man this understood
As he that woldé gladly win,
And to this lord which was within
He spake and said, ‘If I the save,
What sikernessé shall I have
Of covenant, that afterwarde
Thou wolt me yivé such rewarde,
As thou behightest now before?’
That other hath his othés swore
By heven and by the goddés alle,
If that it mighté so befallé
That he out of the pit him brought,
Of all the goodés which he ought²
He shall have even halven dele.

This Bardus said, he wolde wele.
And with this worde his asse anon
He let untrussé, and therupon
Down goth the corde into the pit,
To whiche he hath at ende knit
A staff, wherby, he saide, he wolde
That Adrian him shuldé holde.
But it was tho per chauncé falle,

¹ *Lore*, lost.² *Kinde*, nature.¹ *Tasse*, heap.² *Ought*, owned.

Into that pit was also falle
 An Apé, which at thilké throwe,
 Whan that the cordé cam down lowe,
 All sodeinly therto he skipte
 And it in both his armés clipte.
 And Bardus with his asse anone
 Him hath up draw, and he is gon.
 But whan he sigh it was an Ape,
 He wend all haddé ben a jape
 Of faierie, and sore him dradde.
 And Adrian eft soné gradde
 For helpe and cride and preidé faste.
 And he eft sone his cordé caste.
 But whan it came unto the grounde,
 A great serpént it hath bewounde,
 The which Bardus anone updrough.
 And than him thoughté wel inough,
 It was fantasmé that he herde
 The vois, and he therto answerde:
 "What wight art thou in goddés
 name?"

"I am," quod Adrian, "the same,
 Whose good thou shalt have even
 halfe."

Quod Bardus "Than a goddés halfe
 The thriddé time assaie I shall."
 And cast his cordé forth withall
 Into the pit, and whan it came
 To him, this lord of Rome it name
 And therupon him hath adressed
 And with his hond ful ofté blessed.
 And than he bad to Bardus "Hale!"¹
 And he, which understood his tale,
 Betwene him and his asse all softe
 Hath drawe and set him up a lofte
 Withouten harm all esély.
 He saith not onés "graunt mercy,"²
 But straught him forth to the citee
 And let this pouer Bardus be.
 And nethéles this simple man
 His covenant, so as he can,
 Hath axéd. And that other saide,
 If so be that he him upbraide

¹ *Hale*, "Haul up!"

² *Graunt mercy*, thank you.

Of ought that hath be spoke or do,
 It shall be vengéd of him so
 That him were better to be dede.
 And he can tho no other rede;
 But on his asse ayein he cast
 His trusse and hieth homward fast.
 And whan that he came home to bed,
 He tolde his wife how that he sped.

"But finally, to speke ought more
 Unto this lorde he drad him sore,
 So that a word ne durst he sain.
 And thus upon the morwe ayein
 In the manér as I recorde,
 Forth with his asse and with his
 corde

To gader wode, as he did er,
 He goth, and whan that he cam ner
 Unto the placé where he wolde,
 He gan his Ape anone beholde,
 Which had gadéréd al aboute
 Of stickés here and there a route
 And leide hem redy to his honde,
 Wherof he made his trusse and
 bonde.

Fro daie to daie and in this wise
 This Apé profreth his servíse,
 So that he had of wode inough.
 Upon a time and as he drough
 Toward the wode, he sigh beside
 The greaté gastly serpent glide
 Till that she cam in his presénce,
 And in her kinde a reverence
 She hath him do, and forth withall
 A stone more bright than a cristall
 Out of her mouth to-fore his way
 She let down fall and went away,
 For that he shall nought ben adrad.

"Tho was this pouer Bardus glad,
 Thonkéndé God, and to the stone
 He goth and taketh it up anone
 And hath great wonder in his witte
 How that the beste him hath aquitte
 Where that the mannés sone hath
 failed

For whom he haddé most travailed.

But all he put in Goddés honde
And torneth home, and what he
fonde

Unto his wife he hath it shewed
And they, that weren bothé Jewed,
Accorden that he shulde it selle.
And he no lenger woldé dwelle¹
But forth anone upon the tale
The stone he proffreth to the sale;
And right as he him selfe it sette,
The jueller anone forth fette
The golde and made his paicment,
Therof was no delaïement.
Thus whan this stone was bought
and sold,

Homwárd with joicé many fold
This Bardus goth, and whan he cam
Hom to his hous and that he nam
His gold out of his purs withinne,
He fonde his stone also therinne,
Wherof for joy his herte plaide,
Unto his wife and thus he saide,
‘Lo, here my golde,—lo, here my
stone!’

His wife hath wonder therupon,
And axeth him how that may be.
‘Now by mytrouth, I not,’² quod he,
‘But I dare swere upon a boke
That to my marchant I it toke,
And he it haddé whan I went.
So know I nought to what entent
It is now here, but it be grace.
Forthý to morwe in other place
I will it foundé³ for to selle,
And if it woll nought with him
dwelle,

But crepe into my purse ayein,
Than dare I sauflý swere and sain,
It is the vertue of the stone.’

“The morwe came, and he is gone
To seche about in other stede
His stone to selle, and so he dede
And lefte it with his chapman there.

But whan that he came ellés where,
In presence of his wife at home,
Out of his purs and that he nome
His golde, he founde his stone withal.
And thus it felle him overal
Where he it solde in sondrie place,
Such was the fortune and the grace.
But so well may nothing be hid,
That it nis atté lasté kid.¹

This famé goth abouté Rome
So ferforth, that the wordés come
To themperour Justinián,
And he let sendé for the man
And axéd him, how that it was.

“And Bardus tolde him all the cas,
How that the worme and eke the
beste,

Al though they madé no behesté,
His travaile hadden well aquit.
But he which had a mannés wit,
And made his covenant by mouth
And swore therto all that he couth
To parte and yivé half his good
Hath now foryete how that it stood,
As he which wol no trouthé holde.
This emperour al that he tolde
Hath herde and thilke unkindénesse,
He said, he wolde him self redresse.
And thus in court of jugément
This Adrian was than assent,²
And the quaréll in audiéce
Declaréd was in the preséce
Of themperour and many mo;
Wherof was mochel speché tho.
And great wondring among the
press.

But atté lasté nethéless,
For the partié which hath pleigned
The law hath deméd and ordeigned
By hem that were aviséd wele,
That he shal have the halven dele
Throughout of Adrianés good.
And thus of thilke unkindé blood
Stant the memoire untó this day,

¹ *Doelle*, delay.

² *Not*, know not.

³ *Foundé*, try.

¹ *Kid*, made known.

² *Assent*, sent for.

Where that every wise man may
 Ensamplen him and take in minde
 What shame it is to ben unkinde,
 Ayein the which reson debateth
 And every creäture it hateth.

"Forthy my sone, in thy office
 I redé flee that ilké Vice.
 For right as the cronqué saith
 Of Adrian, how he his feith
 Foryat for worldés covetise,
 Ful oft in suche a maner wise
 Of lovers now a man may se
 Ful many that unkindé be,
 For wel behote and evil last
 That is her life,¹ for atté last
 Whan that they hāve her wille do
 Her love is sone after ago.
 What saist thou, soné, to this
 cas?"—

"My fader, I wil say, Helas,
 That ever such a man was bore
 Which whan he hath his trouthe
 swore
 And hath of lové what he wolde,
 That he at any timé sholde
 Ever after in his herté finde
 To falsen and to ben unkinde.

"But, fader, as touchénd of me,
 I may nought stond in that degre.
 For I toke never of lové why
 That I ne may wel go therby
 And do my profite ellés where
 For any spede I findé there,
 I dare wel thenken, all about,
 But I ne dare nought speke it out,
 And if I dorst I woldé pleigne,
 That she for whom I suffré peine
 And love her ever aliché hote,
 That nouter yivé ne behote
 In rewardng of my service
 It list² her in no maner wise.
 I wol nought say that she is kinde,
 And for to say she is unkinde

¹ Well promised and ill performed, that is their life.

² List, pleases.

That dare I nought by God above
 Which demeth every herte of love,
 He wot that on min owné side
 Shall none unkindéship abide;
 If it shall with my lady dwelle,
 Therof dare I no moré telle.
 Now, godé fader, as it is
 Tell me, what thenketh you of
 this?"—

My sone, of that unkindéship,
 The which toward thy ladisship
 Thou pleignest, for she woll the
 nought,
 Thou art to blamen of thy thought.
 For it may be that thy desire,
 Though it brenne ever as doth the
 fire,

Par cas to her honoúr misset,
 Or ellés timé come nought yet
 Which stant upon thy destiné.
 Forthy my sone, I redé the
 Think well, what ever the befallé,
 For no man hath his lustés alle.
 But as thou toldest me before
 That thou to love art nought for-
 swore

And hast done non unkindénesse,
 Thou might therof thy gracé blesse
 And levé nought that cōtinuānce,
 For there may be no such grevānce
 To love as is Unkindéship.
 Wherof to kepé thy worshíp,
 So as these oldé bokés tale,
 I shall the telle a redy tale.
 Now herken and be ware therby,
 For I will telle it openly.

"Minos, as telleth the poéte,
 The which whilóm was king of
 Crete,

A soné had and Androchee
 He hight. And so befell that he
 Unto Athenés for to lere
 Was sent, and so he bare him there
 For that he was of high lignage,
 Such pride he toke in his corage,

That he foryeten hath the scoles,
 And in riot among the fooler *
 He didde many thinges wronge
 And used thilké life so longe,
 Til atté last of that he wrought
 He found the mischefe which he
 sought,
 Wherof it fell that he was slain.
 His fader, which it herde sain,
 Was wroth, and all that ever hemight
 Of men of armés he him dight
 A strong power and forth he went
 Unto Athenés, where he brent
 The pleiné contré al aboute.
 The cites stood of him in doubte ¹
 As they that no defencé had
 Ayein the power which he lad.
 Egéus which was theré king
 His counseil toke upon this thing,
 For he was than in the citee,
 So that of pees into trettee
 Betwene Minós and Egéus
 They fell, and bene accorded thus,
 That king Minós fro yere to yere
 Receivé shal as thou shalt here
 Out of Athenés for truége
 Of men that were of mighty age
 Personés nine, of which he shall
 His willé don in speciall
 For vengeance of his sonés deth,
 None other gracé there ne geth
 But for to take the juise, ²
 And that was don in suche a wise.
 Upon which stood a wonder cas.
 For thilké timé so it was,
 Wherof that men yet rede and sing,
 King Minos had in his keeping
 A cruel monster, as saith the gest.
 For he was half man and half beste,
 And Minotaurus he was hote,
 Which was begotten in a riote
 Upon Pasiphe, his owné wife,
 Whil he was out upon the strife
 Of thilké greaté siege at Troie.

¹ Double, tear.² Juise, judgment.

But she which lost hath allé joie
 Whan that she sigh this monster bore
 Bad men ordeigne anon therfore.
 And fell that ilké timé thus,
 There was a clerke, one Dedalus,
 Which haddé ben of her assent ¹
 Of that her world was so miswent ;
 And he made of his owné wit,
 Wherof the remembraunce is yit,
 For Minotauré suche a hous
 That was so stronge and merveilous
 That what man that withinné went,
 There was so many a sondry went
 That he ne shuldé nought come out,
 But gone amaséd all about.
 And in this hous to locke and warde
 Was Minotaurus put in warde,
 That what life ² that therinné cam,
 Or man or beste, he overcam
 And slough, and fed him therupon.
 And in this wisé many one
 Out of Athenés for truége
 Devouréd weren in that rage.
 For every yere they shope hem so,
 They of Athenés er they go
 Toward that ilké wofull chaunce
 As it was set in ordenaunce,
 Upon Fortune her lot they cast ;
 Till that Theséüs atté laste,
 Which was the kingés soné there
 Amongés other that there were,
 In thilké yere as it befell
 The lot upon his chauncé fell.
 He was a worthy knight withall,
 And whan he sigh his chauncé fall,
 He ferde as though he toke none
 hede,
 But all that ever he might spede
 With him and with his felaschip
 Forth into Crete he goth by ship,
 Where that the king Minós he sought
 And profréth all that he him ought
 Upon the point of her accorde.

¹ Of her assent, sent for by her.² Life, body ; what life, whoever.

This sterné king, this cruel lorde,
Toke every day one of the nine
And put into the disciplne
Of Minotaure to be devoured.
But Thesëús was so favoured
That he was kept till atté last,
And in the meané while he cast
What thing him weré best to do.
And fell, that Ariadné tho,
Which was the doughter of Minós,
And haddé herd the worthy los¹
Of Thesëús and of his might
And sigh he was a lusty knight,
Her holé herte on him she laide.
And he also of love her praide
So ferforth that they were alone,
And she ordeineth than anone
In what manér she shuld him save.
And shópé so, she did him have
A clue of threde of which withinne
First atté dore he shall beginne
With him to také that one ende,
That whan he wold ayeinward wende
He mighté go the samé wey.
And over this so as I say,
Of pitch she toke him a pelote,²
The which he shulde into the throte
Of Minotauré casté right.
Such wepon also for him she dight,
That he by reson may nought faile
To make an ende of his bataile.
For she him taught in sondry wise
Till he was knowe of thilke emprise
How he this besté shuldé quelle.
And thus short talé for to telle,
So as this maiden him had taught
Thesëús with this monster faught
And smote of his hede, the whiche
he nam,
And by the thred, so as he cam
He goth ayein, til he were out.
So was great wonder all about;
Minós the tribute hath relesed,

¹ *Los*, praise.² *Toke him a pelote*, gave him a ball.

And so was all the werré cessed
Betwene Athenes and hem of Crete.

“But now to speke of thilké swete
Whose beauté was withouté wan,
This faire maiden Adriane,
Whan that she sigh Thesëús sounde
Was never yet upon this grounde
A gladder wight than she was tho.
Thesëús dwelt a day or two
Where that Minós great chere him
ded.

Thesëús in a privé sted
Hath with this maiden spoke and
rouned,¹

That she to him was abandoined;
For he so fairé tho behight²
That ever while he livé might
He shuld her také for his wife
And as his owné hertés life
He wolde her love and trouthé bere.
And she, which mighté nought for-
bere,

So soré lovéth him ayein,
That what as ever he wold sain
With all her herté she beleveth.
And thus his purpos he acheveth,
So that assuréd of his trouthe
With him she went, and that was
routhe.

Fedra her yongé suster eke,
A lusty maide, a sobrc, a meke,
Fulfilléd of all curtesie,
For susterhode and compaignie
Of lové which was hem betwene,
To sen her suster made a quene
Her fader lefte and forth she went
With him which all his first entent
Foryat within a litel throwe,³
So that it was all over throwe
Whan she best wend it shuldé stonde.
The ship was blowé fro the londe,
Wherinné that they sailend were.
This Ariadne had mochel fere

¹ *Rounded*, whispered.² *Tho behight*, then promised.³ *Throwe*, space of time.

Of that the wind so loudé blewe,
As she which of the see ne knewe,
And praidé for to reste a while.
And so fell that upon an ile
Which Chio highté they ben drive,
Where he to her hath levé yive,
That she shall lond and take her
rest,

But that was nothing for her best.
For whan she was to londé brought,
She, which that timé thoughté
nought

But allé trouth and toke no kepe,
Hath laid her softé for to slepe,
As she which longe hath ben for-
wacched.

But certés she was evil macched
And fer from allé lovés kinde.
For moré than the beste¹ unkinde
Theséús, which no trouthe kept,
While that this yongé lady slept,
Fulfilled of all unkindéship
Hath all foryete the godéship,
Whiche Ariadné him hadde do,
And bad unto the shipmen tho
Hale up the saile and nought abide,
And forth he goth the samé tide
Towarde Athenes, and her on londe
He lefté, which lay nigh the stronde
Slepéndé til that she awoke.

But whan that she cast up her loke
Toward the stronde and sigh no
wight,

Her herté was so sore aflight²
That she ne wisté what to thinke
But drough her to the water brinke,
Where she beheld the see at large.
She sigh no ship, she sigh no barge
Als ferforth as she mighté kenne.
'Ha lord,' she saidé, 'which a senné,
As all the world shall after here,
Upon this wofull woman here
This worthy knight hath done and
wrought,

¹ Beste, beast.

² Aflight, afflicted.

I wend I had his lové bought,
And so deserved atté nede,
Whan that he stood upon his drede,
And eke the love he me behight.
It is great wonder, how he might
Towardés me now ben unkinde,
And so to let out of his minde
Thing which he said his owné mouth.
But after this, whan it is couth
And drawe into the worldés fame,
It shall ben hindring of his name.
For well he wote, and so wote I,
He yafe his trouthe bodily
'That he min honour shuldé kepe.'
And with that word she gan to wepe
And sorweth moré than inough.
Her fairé tresses she to-drough
And with her self toke such a strife,
That she betwene the deth and life
Swounéndé lay full oft amonge.
And all was this on him alonge,
Which was to love unkindé so,
Wherof the wrong shall evermo
Stond in croníque of remembraunce.
And eke it axeth a vengeaunce
To ben unkinde in lovés cas
So as Theséús thanné was,
All though he were a noble knight.
For he the lawe of lovés right
Forfefted hath in allé way,
That Ariadne he put away,
Which was a great unkindé dede.
And after this, so as I rede,
Fedra, the which her suster is,
He toke in stede of her, and this
Fell afterward to mochel tene.
For thilké Vice of whiche I mene,
Unkindéship, where that it falleth
The trouthe of mannés hert it palleth
That he can no good dede acquite,
So may he stonde of nq merite
Towardés God and eke also
Men clepen him the worldés fo,
For he no moré than the Fende
Unto none other man is frende,

But all toward him self alone.

"Forthy my sone, in thy persone
This Vice above all other fle."—

My fader, as ye techen me,
I thenké don in this matere.
But over this now wold I here,
Wherof I shall me shrivé more."

"My godé sone, as for thy lore,
After the reule of Covetise,
I shall the propreté devise
Of every Vicé by and by.
Now herke don be wel ware therby.

"**In the lignage** of Avarice,
My soné, yet there is a Vice,
His righté name it is Ravine,
Which hath a route of his covine.
Ravine among the maisters dwel-

leth,
And with his servants as men telleth
Extorción is now witholdie.
Ravine of other mennés folde
Maketh his lardér and paieth
nought.

For where as ever it may be sought
In his hous there shall no thing
lacke,

And that ful ofte abieth the packe
Of pouer men that dwelle aboute ;
Thus stant the comune people in
doubte,

Which can do none amendément.
For whan him failleth paicment,
Raviné maketh non other skille,
But taketh by strength al that he
wille.

So ben there in the samé wise
Lovers, as I the shall devise,
That whan nought ellés may availe,
Anone with strengthe they assaile
And get of lové the sesinc
Whan they se timé, by ravine.

"Forthy my soné, shrive the
here,

If thou hast ben a ravinere
Of lové."—"Certes, fader, no,

For I my lady lové so

For, though I were as was Pompéy
That all the world me wolde obey,
Or ellés such as Alisaundre,
I woldé nought do suche a sclaunder.

It is nogood man, which sodoth."

"In godé feith, sone, thou saist
soth.

For he that woll of purveáncé
By such a wey his lust avance
He shall it after sore abie,
But if¹ these olde ensamples lie."

"Now, godé fader, tell me one,
So as ye connen many one,
Touchend of love in this matere."

"Now list, my sone, and thou
shalt here

So as it hath befall er this
In lovés cause how that it is,
A man to také by ravine
The preié which is feminine.

There was a roial noble kinge,
A riche of allé worldés thinge,
Which of his propre enheritaunce
Athenés had in governaunce,
And whoso thenké therupon,
His namé was king Pandión.
Two doughters had he by his
wife,

The which he lovéd as his life.
The firsté doughter Progné hight,
And the secónde, as she well might,
Was clepéd fairé Philomene,
To whom fell after mochel tene.²
The fader of his purveáncé
His doughter Progné wolde avance,
And yafe her unto mariáge
A worthy king of high lignáge,
A noble knight eke of his honde,
So was he kid³ in every londe.
Of Tracé he hight Tereús,
The clerke Ovidé telleth thus.

¹ But if, unless.

² Tene, sorrow.

³ Kid, made known, renowned.

This Terëús his wife home lad,
 A lusty life with her he had *
 Till it befell upon a tide,
 This Progne, as she lay him beside,
 Bethought her how it mighté be
 That she her suster mighté se;
 And to her lorde her will she saide
 With goodly wordés and him praide
 That she unto her mighté go,
 And if it likéd him nought so,
 That than he wolde himselvé wende,
 Or ellés by some other sende
 Which might her deré suster grete
 And shape how that they mighten
 mete.

Her lorde anone to that he herde
 Yaf his accorde and thus answérde:
 'I woll,' he saidé, 'for thy sake,
 The wey after thy suster take
 My self and bring her, if I may.'
 And she with that, there as she lay,
 Began him in her armés clippe
 And kist him with her softé lippe
 And saidé: 'Siré, graunt mercy.'
 And he sone after was redý
 And toke his levé for to go.

In sory timé did he so.
 This Terëús goth forth to shippe
 With him and all his felshippe.
 By sea the righté cours he nam
 Unto the contré till he cam
 Where Philoméne was dwelling,
 And of her suster the tiding
 He tolde and tho they weren glad
 And mochel joie of him they made.
 The fader and the moder bothe
 To leve her doughter weré lothe
 But if they weren in presence,
 And nethéles at reverence
 Of him that wolde him self travaile,
 They woldé nought he shuldé faile,
 And that they praiden yive her leve.
 And she that woldé nought beleve ¹
 In allé hasté made her yare ²

¹ Believe, stay behind.² I'are, ready.

Toward her suster for to fare
 With Terëús and forth she went.
 And he with al his hole entent
 Whan she was fro her friendés go
 Assoteth of her lové so
 His eyé might he nought witholde
 That he ne must on her beholde,
 And with the sight he gan desire
 And set his owné hert a fire.
 And fire whan it to tow approacheth
 To him anon the strength accro-
 cheth,¹
 Till with his hete it be devoured,
 The tow ne may nought be soc-
 coured.

And so the tirann ravinere,
 Whan that she was in his powere,
 And he therto sigh time and place,
 As he that lost hath all his grace,
 Foryate he was a wedded man,
 And in a rage on her he ran
 Right as a wolf that taketh his pray.
 And she began to crie and pray:
 'O fader dere, o moder dere,
 Now help!' But they ne might it
 here,

And she was of to litel might
 Defence ayein so rude a knight
 To maké whan he was so wode
 That he no reson understode.
 But whan she to her selvé come
 And of her mischefe hedé nomé
 And knewe how that she was no
 maide,

With wofull herté thus she saide:
 'O thou of allé men the worst,
 Where was there everman that dorst
 Do such a dede as thou hast do?
 That day shall falle, I hopé so,
 That I shall tell out all my fille
 And with my speche I shall fulfille
 The widé world in brede and
 length

That thou hast do to me by strength.

¹ Accrocheth, increaseth.

If I among the people dwelle
 Unto the people I shall it telle ;
 And if I be withinné wall
 Of stonés closéd, than I shall
 Unto the stonés clepe and crie,
 And tellen hem thy felonie ;
 And if I to the wodés wende,
 There shall I tellé tale and ende
 And crie it to the briddés out,
 That they shall here it all about :
 For I so loude it shall reherce,
 That my vois shall the heaven perce,
 That it shall souné in Goddés ere.
 Ha falsé man, where is thy fere ?
 O more cruél than any beste,
 How hast thou holden thy behest
 Which thou unto my suster madest ?
 O thou, which allé love ungladest
 And art ensample of all untrewé,
 Now woldé god my suster knewé
 Of thin untrouthe, how that it stood !¹
 And he than as a leon wode¹
 With his unhappy hondés strong
 He caught her by the tresses long
 With whiche he bondé both her
 armes,
 That was a feble dede of armes,
 And to the grounde anone her cast,
 And out he clippeth also fast
 Her tungé with a paire of sheres.
 So what with blode and what with
 teres,
 Out of her eyne and of her mouth,
 He made her fairé face uncouth.
 She lay swounéd unto the dethe,
 There was unnethés any brethe.
 But yet whan he her tungé reste,
 A litel part therof he lefte.
 But she withall no word may souné
 But chitre² and as a brid jargoune.
 And nethéles that wodé hounde
 Her body hent up fro the grounde
 And sent her there as by his will
 She shulde abide, in prison still

¹ *Wode*, madly raging.² *Chitre*, chirp.

For ever mo. But now take hede
 What after fell of this misdede.
 Whan all this mischefe was befallé,
 This Teréús, that foule him fallé,
 Unto his contré home he tigh,¹
 And whan he cam his paleis nigh,
 His wife alredy there him kept.
 Whan he her sigh, anon he wept,
 And that he didé for deceit,
 For she began to axe him streit :
 'Where is my suster ?' And he saide
 That she was dede, and Progne
 abraide,
 As she that was a wofull wife,
 And stood betwene her deth and life
 Because she herdé such tidíng.
 But for she sigh her lord wepíng,
 She wendé nought but alle trouth
 And haddé wel the moré routh.
 The perlés weré tho forsake
 To her and blacké clothés take,
 As she that was gentil and kinde.
 In worship of her susters minde²
 She made a riche enterément,³
 For she found none amendément
 To sighen or to sobbé more,
 So was there guile under the gore.
 "Now levé we this king and
 quene,
 And torne ayein to Philomene.
 As I began to tellen erst,
 Whan she cam into prison ferst,
 It thought a kingés doughter
 straunge
 To maké so sodeín a chaunge
 Fro welth unto so great a wo.
 And she began to thenké tho,
 Though she by mouthé nothing
 praide,
 Within her herté thus she saide :
 'O thou, almighty Jupiter,
 That highé sittest and lokest fer,

¹ *Tigh*, drew.² In reverence to her sister's memory.³ *Enterément*, interment, funeral pomp.

Thou suffrest many a wrong doing,
 And yet it is nought thy willing.
 To the there may nothing ben hid,
 Thou wost¹ how it is me betid.
 I wolde I haddé nought be bore.
 For than I haddé nought forlore
 My speche and my virginité.
 But godé lord, all is in the,
 Whan thou therof wolt do ven-
 geaünce

And shapé my deliveraünce !'
 And ever among this lady wepte
 And thoughté that she never kepte
 To be a worldés woman more,
 And that she wissheth evermore.
 But ofte unto her suster dere
 Her herté speketh in this manere
 And saide : 'Ha suster, if ye knewe
 Of min estate ye woldé rewe
 I trowe, and my deliveraünce
 Yewoldé shape, and do vengeaünce
 On him that is so fals a man.
 And nethéles, so as I can,
 I woll you send some tokening,
 Wherof ye shall have knoueleching
 Of thing I wot that shall you loth
 The which you toucheth and me
 both.'

And tho within a while als tite²
 She wafe a cloth of silke all white
 With letters and ymagery,
 In which was all the felony,
 Which Teréus to her hath do,
 And lappéd it to-gider tho
 And set her signet therupon
 And sent it unto Progne anon.
 The messenger which forth it bare,
 What it amounteth is nought ware,
 And nethéles to Progne he goth
 And prively taketh her the cloth
 And went ayein right as he cam,
 The Court of him none hedé name.

"Whan Progne of Philomené
 herde

She woldé knowe how that it ferde,
 And openeth that the man hath
 brought

And wot therby what hath be
 wrought

And what mischefe there is befallé.
 In swouné tho she gan down falle,
 And este arose and gan to stonde,
 And eft she taketh the clothe on
 honde,

Beheld the letters and thymáges,
 But atté last of suche oultráges
 She said, 'Weping is nought the
 bote,'¹

And swereth, if that she livé mote
 It shall be vengéd other wise.
 And with that she gan her avise,
 How first she might unto her winne
 Her suster, that no man withinne,
 But only they that weré swore, '
 It shuldé knowe, and shope ther-
 fore,

That Teréus nothing it wist,
 And yet right as her selven list
 Her suster was delivered sone
 Out of prisón, and by the mone
 To Progné she was brought by
 night.

Whan eche of other had a sight
 In chambre there they were alone,
 They maden many a pitous mone.
 But Progné most of sorwé madé,
 Which sigh her suster pale and fade
 And spechéles and deshonoúred
 Of that she haddé be defloured,
 And eke upon her lord she thought
 Of that he so untruely wrought
 And had his espousailé broke,
 She maketh a vow it shall be wroke.
 And with that word she kneleth
 down

Weping in great devocioun,
 Unto Cupide and to Venus
 She praid and saidé thanné thus :

¹ Wost, knowest. ² Als tite, promptly.

¹ Bote, remedy.

'O ye, to whom no thing asterte¹
 Of Lové may, for every herte
 Ye knowe, as ye that ben above
 The God and the Goddésse of Love,
 Ye witen well, that ever yit
 With al min herte and all my wit
 I have ben trewe in my degre
 And ever thoughté for to be,
 And never love in other place
 But all only the king of Trace
 Whiche is my lord and I his wife.
 But now alas this wofull strife,
 That I him thus ayeinward finde
 The most untrewé and most un-
 kinde

That ever in ladies armés lay,
 And wel I wot that he ne may
 Amend his wronge, it is so great,
 For he to litel of me lete
 Whan he min owné suster toke
 And me that am his wife forsoke.'

Lo, thus to Venus and Cupide
 She praid, and furthermoreshé cride
 Unto Apollo the highést
 And said: 'O mighty god of rest,
 Thou do vengeaúnce of this debate,
 My suster and all her estate
 Thou wost, and I shall bere a blame
 Of that my suster hath a shame,
 That Teréús to her I sent.
 And well thou wost, that min entent
 Was all for worship and for good.
 O lord, that yivest the livés food
 To every wight, I pray the here
 These wofull susters that ben here,
 And let us nought to the ben loth,
 We ben thin owné women both.'
 Thus pleigneth Progne and axeth
 wreche,

And though her suster lacké speche,
 To him that allé things wote
 Her sorwe is nought the lassé hote.
 But he that thanné herd hem two
 Him ought have sorwed evermo

¹ *Asterie*, escape.

For sorwe which was hem betwene.
 With signés pleigneth Philomene,
 And Progné saith: 'It shal be
 wreke,

That all the world therof shall speke.'

"And Progne tho sikenessé
 feigned,

Wherof unto her lord she pleigned
 And preith she mote her chambre
 kepe

And as her liketh wake and slepe.
 And he her graunteth to be so.
 And thus to-gider ben they two,
 That wold him but a litel good.
 Now herke hereafter, how it stood
 Of wofull auntrés that befelle.

These susters, that ben bothé felle,
 And that was nought on hem alonge
 But only on the greaté wronge
 Which Teréús hem hadde do,
 They shopen for to venge hem tho.
 This Teréús by Progne his wife
 A soné hath, which as his life
 He loveth, and Ithis he hight.
 His moder wisté well she might
 Do Teréús no moré greve
 Than slee his child which was so
 leve.

Thus she that was as who saith mad
 Of wo which hath her overlad,
 Without insight of inoderhede
 Foryat pité and losté drede
 And in her chambre privly
 This childé without noise or cry
 She slough and hewe him all to
 pieces.

And after with diversé spieces
 The flessch whan it was so to-hewe.
 She taketh and maketh therof a
 sewe,¹

With which the fader at his mete
 Was servéd till he had him ete
 That he ne wist how that it stood.
 But thus his owné flessch and blood

¹ *Sewer*, broth. stew.

Him self devoureth ayeine kinde,
As he that was to-fore unkinde.
And than er that he were arise,
For that he shuldé bene agrise
To shewen him the child was dede,
This Philomené toke the hede
Betwene two disshes, and all wrothe
Tho camen forth the susters bothe
And setten it upon the bord.
And Progné than began the word
And saide : ' O werst of alle wicke,
Of consciéncé whom no pricke
May steré, lo, what thou hast do,
Lo, here ben now we susters two.
O raviner, lo here thy prey,
With whom so falslich on the wey
Thou hast thy tirannfé wrought,
Lo, now it is somedele abought
And beter it shall, for of thy dede
The world shall ever sing and rede
In remembraunce of thy defame,
For thou to love hast done such
shame,

That it shall never be foryete.'
With that he sterde up fro the mete,
And shove the bord into the flore,
And caught a swerd anone and swore
That they shulde of his hondés deie.
And they unto the goddés crie
Begunné with so loude a steven,
That they were herde unto the
heven,

And in the twinkeling of an eye
The goddés that the mischefe sigh
Her formés chaungéd allé thre.
Echone of hem in his degré
Was torned into a briddés kinde
Diversélich as men may finde.
After thestate that they were inne
Her formés weré set a twinne,
And as it telleth in the tale
The first into a nightingale
Was shape, and that was Philomene,
Which in the winter is nought sene,
For thanné ben the levés falle

And naked ben the bussches alle.
For after that she was a brid
Her will was ever to ben hid
And for to dwelle in privé place,
That no man shuldé sen her face
For shamé which may nought ben
lassed

Of thing that was to-foré passed,
And halt her clos the winter day.
But whan the winter goth away
And that natúré the goddesse
Woll of her owné fre largesse
With herbés and with flourés bothe
The feldés and the medewes clothe,
And eke the wodés and the greves
Ben heléd¹ all with grené leves,
So that a brid her hidé may
Betwené March, Aprille and May,
She that the winter² held her clos
For puré shame and nought aros,
Whan that she sigh the bowés thicke
And that there is no baré sticke
But all is hid with levés grene,
To wodé cometh this Philomene
And maketh her firsté yerés flight,
Where as she singeth day and night,
And in her song all openly
She maketh her pleint and saith :

' O why,

O why ne were I yet a maide ?'
For so these oldé wisé saide
Which understoden what she ment,
Her notés ben of suche entent.
And eke they said, how in her songe
She maketh great joy and merth
amonge

And saith : ' Ha, now I am a brid,
Ha, now my facé may ben hid !'
Thus medleth she with joié wo
And with her sorwé merth also,
So that of lovés maladie
She maketh diversé melodie
And saith : ' Love is a wofull blisse,

¹ Greves . . . *heléd*, groves . . . covered.

² The winter, during winter.

A wisdom, which can no man wisse,
A lusty fever, a woundé softe.
This noté she reherseþ ofte
To hem which understonde her tale.

“Now have I of this nightingale,
Which erst was clepéd Philomene,
Told all that ever woldé mene
Both of her forme and of her note,
Wherof men may the story note.
And of her suster Progne I finde,
How she was tornéd out of kinde
Into a swalwé swift of wing,
Which eke in winter lith swooning
There as she may no thing be sene,
But whan the world is woxé grene
And comen is the somer tide,
Than fleeth she forth and ginneth
to chide

And chitereth out in her langage
What falshede is in mariage;
And telleth in a maner speche
Of Teréús the spouse breche.
She wol nought in the wodés dwelle,
For she wold openliché telle,
And eke for that she was a spouse,
Among the folk she cometh to house
To do these wivés understonde
The falshode of her husébonde,
That they of hem beware also,
For there be many untrewé of tho.

“Thus ben the susters briddés
both

And ben toward the men so loth,
That they ne woll for puré shame
Unto no mannés hond be tame,
For ever it dwelleth in her minde
Of that they found a man unkinde,
And that was falsé Teréús.
If suché one be amonge us
I not, but his condition
Men say in every region
Withinné town and eke without
Now regneth comunlich about.
And nethéles in remembraunce
I woll declare what vengeaunce

The goddés hadden him ordeigned,
Of that the sustershadden pleigne.
For anone after he was chaunged
And from his owné kindéstraunged,
A lappéwinké made he was
And thus he hoppeth on the gras,
And on his heed there stont upright
A crest in token of a knight,
And yet unto this day, men saith,
A lappéwinke hath lost his feith
And is the brid falsést of alle.

“Beware, my sone, er the so falle,
For if thou be of such covine
To get of lové by ravine
Thy lust, it may the fallé thus,
As it befell of Teréús.”—

“My fader, nay, Goddés forbode,
Me weré lever be fortrode,
With wildé hors and be to-drawe,
Er I ayein love and his lawe
Did any thing, or loude or still,
Which weré nought my ladies will.
Men saien that every love hath
drede,

So folweth it that I her drede,
For I her love, and who so
dredeth,—

To plesé his love and serve, him
nedeth.

Thus may ye knowen by this skill,
That no Raviné done I will
Ayein her will by such a wey.
But while I live I will obey,
Abiding on her courtesie
If any mercy wolde her plie.¹

“Forthy my fader, as of this
I wot nought I have do amis.
But furthermore I you beseche,
Some other point that ye me teche,
And axeth forth if there be ought,
That I may be the better taught.”—

“**Whan Goddés** in pouer
estate
Stont with him self upon debate

¹ *Plie*, bend, turn.

Through lacke of his misgovern-
aunce,

That he unto his sustenaunce
Ne can non other waie finde
To get him good, than as the blinde
Which seeth nought what shal after
fall,

That ilke Vîc which men call
Of Robbery he taketh on honde,
Wherof by water and by londe
Of thing which other men beswinke¹
He get him cloth and mete and
drinke,

Him reccheth nought what he be-
ginne

Through thefteso that he may winne.
Forthy to maken his purchas
He lith awaitend on the pas,
And what thing that he seeth ther
passe

He taketh his parte or more or lasse
If it be worthy to be take,
He can the packes well ransake.
So prively bereth none about
His gold that he ne fint it out,
Or other juell what it be
He taketh it as his proprety
In wodés and in feldés eke.

Thus Robberie goth to seke
Where as he may his purchas finde.

And right so in the samé kinde
My godé sone, as thou might here,
To speke of love in the matere
And make a verray résemblance
Right as a thefe maketh chevesance
And robbeth mennés goodes about
In wode and felde where he goth out,
So be there of these lovers some
In wildé stedés² where they come
And finden there a woman able
And therto placé covenáble,
Withouté leve er that they fare
They take a parte of that chaffare.

But therof wot nothing the wife
At home, which loveth as her life
Her lord and sit all day wisshing
After her lordés home coming.
But whan he cométh home at eve
Anone he maketh his wife beleve,
For she nought ellés shuldé knowe
He telleth her, how his hunt hath
blowe

And howe his houndés have well
ronne,

And how there shone a mery sonne,
And how his hawkés flownen wele.
But he wol telle her never a dele,
How he to love untrewé was
Of that he robbéd in the pas
And toke his lust under the shawe
Ayein Love and ayein his lawe.

"Which thing, my sone, I the
forbede,

For it is an ungodly dede.
For who that taketh by robberie
His love, he may nought justifie
His cause, and so ful ofté sithe¹
For ones that he hath ben blithe
He shall ben after sory thries.
Ensamples for such robberies
I findé write as thou shalt here
Accordend unto this matere.

"I rede, how whilom was a
maide

The fairest, as Ovîdé saide,
Which was in hiré timé tho.²
And she was of the chambere also
Of Pallas, which is the goddésse
And wife to Marte, of whom prow-
esse

Is yové to these worthy knightes,
For he is of so greaté mightes,
That he govérneth the bataile;
Withouten him may nought avale
The strongé hond, but he it helpe,
There may no knight of armes
yelpé³

¹ *Beswinke*, obtain by labour.

² *Stedes*, places.

¹ *Ofté sithe*, many times. ² *Yelpé*, boast.

But he fight under his banere,
 But now to speke of my matere
 This fairé, fresshé, lusty may¹
 Alone as she went on a day
 Upon the strondé for to play,
 There came Neptúnus in the way,
 Which hath the see in governaunce,
 And in his herté such plesaunce
 He toke whan he this maiden sigh,
 That all his hert aros on high.
 For he so sodeinlich unware
 Beheld the beauté that she bare,
 And cast anone within his hert
 That she him shall no way astert.
 This maiden which Cornix by name
 Was hoté, dredend allé shame,
 Sigh that she mighténought debate,
 And well she wist he wolde algate
 Fulfill his lust of robberie,
 Anone began to wepe and crie
 And said, 'O Pallas noble quene,
 Shew now thy might, and let besene,
 To kepe and savé min honoúr!' ²
 That word was nought so soné
 spoke,

Whan Pallas shopé recoverir
 After the will and the desíre
 Of hiré which a maiden was,
 And sodeinlich upon this cas
 Out of her womanisshé kinde
 Into a briddés like I finde
 She was transforméd forth withall,
 So*that Neptunus nothing stal
 Of such thing that he wolde have
 stole.

With fethers blacke as any cole
 Out of his armés in a throwe
 She fleigh before his eyen a crowe;
 Which was to her a more delite
 To kepe her maidenhedé white
 Under the wede of fethers blacke,
 In perles whité than forsake
 That² no life may restore ayein.
 But thus Neptúne his hert in vein

¹ May, maid.² That, that which.

Hath upon robberis set.
 The bird is flowe and he was let
 The fairé maid him hath escaped,
 Wherof for ever he was bejaped
 And scornéd of that he hath lore.

"My soné, be thou ware ther-
 fore,

So as I shall the yet devise
 Another talé therupon,
 Which fell by oldé daiés gone.

¶ **Sing Lichadur** upon his wife
 A doughter had, a goodly life
 And clené maide of worthy fame,
 Calfstona whose righté name
 Was clepéd, and of many a lorde
 She was besought, but her accorde
 To lové mighté no man winne,
 As she whiche hath no lust ther-
 inne,

But swore within her hert and saide,
 That she woll ever ben a maide.
 Wherfore, to kepe her selfe in pees,
 With suche as Amadriades
 Were clepéd, wodémaiden's tho,
 And with the nimphés eke also
 Upon the spring of fresshé welles
 She shope to dwelle and no where
 elles.

And thus came this Calistóná
 Into the wode of Tegeá,
 Where she virginité behight
 Unto Diane, that on a day
 Was priveliche stole away.
 For Jupiter through his queintise
 From her it toke in suche a wise,
 So that it mighté nought be hid.
 And therupon it is betid,
 Diané, whiche it herdé tell,
 In privé place unto a welle
 With nimphes al a compaigny
 Was come and in a ragery
 She saidé, that she bathé wolde,
 And bad that every maiden sholde
 With her all naked bath also.
 And tho began the privé wo.

With shame from her the nymphés
fled,
Till whanné that natúre her spedde,
That of a soné, which Archas
Was naméd, she delivered was.

And tho Juno, which was the wife
Of Jupiter, wrothe and hastife
In purpose for to do vengeaunce,
Came forth upon this ilké chaunce,
And to Calistona she spake
And set upon her many a lacke
And said : ' Ha, now thou art atake,
That thou thy werk might nought
forsake.

Ha, thou ungoodly ypocrite,
How thou art greatly for to wite.
Thy greté beauté shall be toined,
Through which that thou hast be
mistorned,

Thy largé front, thy eyen gray
I shall hem chaunge in other way,
And all the fecture of thy face
In such a wise I shall deface,
That every man the shall forbere.'

With that the likenesse of a bere
She toke and was forshape anone.
Within a time and therupon
Befell, that with a bow in honde
To hunte and gamé for to fonde
Into that wodé goth to play
Her sone Archás, and in his way
It hapneth that this beré came.
And whan that she good hedé name,
Where that he stood under the
bough,

She knewe him well and to him
drough,

For though she had her formé lore,
The lové was nought lost therfóre
Which kinde hath set under his lawe.
Whan she under the wodé shawe
Her child beheld, she was so glad
That she with both her armés sprad,
As though she were in woman-
hede,

Toward him come and toke none
hede

Of that a bow he baré bent.
And he with that an arwe hath
hent¹

And gan to teise² it in his bowe,
As he, that can none other knowe
Put that it was a besté wilde.
But Jupiter, which woldé shilde
The moder and the sone also,
Ordeineth for hem bothé two
That they for ever weré save.

" But thus, my soné, thou might
have

Ensamplé, and by other wey
In oldé bokés as I rede,
Such robberie is for to drede,
And namélich of thilke good
Whiche every woman that is good
Desireth for to kepe and holde
As whilom was by daiés olde.
For if thou here my talé wele
Of that was tho, thou might somdele
Of olde ensamples taken hede
How that the floure of maidenhede
Was thilké timé holde in pris.
And so it was, and so it is,
And so it shall for ever stonde,
And for thou shalt it understonde,
Now herken a tale next suend,
How maidenhede is to commend.

Of Rome among the gestes olde
I find, how that Valéry tolde,
That what man tho was emperour
Of Romé he sholde done honour
To the virgin, and in the wey
Where he her mete, he shulde obey
In worship of virginité,
Which tho was a great dignité
Nought onlich of the women tho,
But of the chasté men also
It was commended over all.
And for to speke in speciáll
Touchend of men ensample I finde.

¹ Hent, seized.

² Teise, stretch.

"Phirins, which was of mannés kinde

Above all other the fairést
Of Rome and eke the comeliést,
That well was hiré which him might

Beholde and have of him a sight.
Thus was he tempted ofté sore,
But for he woldé be no more
Among the women so coveited,
The beauté of his facé streited
He hath, and thrust out both his eyne,

That allé women whiche it sein
Than afterwarde of him ne rought.
And thus his maidenhede he bought.

"So may I prové wel forthý
Above all other under the sky,
Who that the vertues woldé peise,
Virginité is for to preise,

Which as thapocalips recordeth
To Criste in heven best accordeth.
So may it shewé well therfore
As I have tolde it here to-fore,
In heven and eke in erth also .

It is accept to bothé two.
Out of his flesshe a man to live
Gregoire hath this ensample yive
And saith: It shall rather be told¹

Lich to an aungel manyfold
Than to the life of mannes kinde;
There is no reson for to finde,
But only through the grace above,
In flessché without flesschly love
A man to livé chasté herc.

And nethéles a man may here
Of suché that have ben er this,
And yet there ben, but for it is
A vertue which is seldé wonne,
Now I this matter have begonne
I thenké tellen over more,
Which is, my soné, for thy lore,
If that the list to taken hede,
To trete upon the maidenhede.

¹ Told, accounted.

"The boke saith that a mannés life

Upon knighthode in werre and strife
Is set among his enemies.

The freilé flessch, whose nature is
Ay redy for to sporne and fall,
The firsté foman is of all.

For thilké werre is redy ay,
It werreth night, it werreth day,
So that a man hath never rest.
Forthý is thilké knight the best
Through might and grace of goddés sonde

Which that batailé may withstonde,
Wherof yet dwelleth the memoire
Of hem that whilome the victoire
Of thilké dedly werré hadden,
The high prowessé which they laden

Wherof the soulé stood amended,
Upon this erth yet is commended.

An emperour by thilké daies
There was, and he at all assaies
A worthy knight was of his honde,
Therewas nonesuch in all thelonde,
But yet for all his vassellage¹

He stood unwedded all his age,
And in cronique as it is tolde
He was an hundred winter olde.
And haddé ben a worthy knight
Both of his lawe and of his might.
But whan men wolde his knight-
hood peise

And of his dedes of armés preise
Of that he didé with his hondes,
Whan he the kingés and the londes
To his subjection put under,
Of all that prise hath he no wonder,
For he it set of none accompte
And said, all that may nought
amounte

Ayein a point whiche he hath nome,
That he his flessch hath overcome.

¹ *Vassellage*, valour in arms, as in Chaucer's "Knight's Tale" and in Barbour's "Bruce."

He was a virgine, as he said ;
On that bataile his pris he laid.

Lo now, my sone, avisé the."—

"Ye, fader, all this may well be.

But if all other didé so,
The world of men were sone ago ;¹
And in the lawe a man may finde
How God to man by wey of kinde
Hath set the world to multiply.
And who that woll him justify,
It is inough to do the lawe.

And nethíles your godé sawe
Is good to kepé, who so may,
I woll nought there ayein say nay."

"**My soné**, take it as I say,
If maidenhed be take away
Withouté lawés ordenaúnce,
It may nought failen of vengeaúnce.

"And if thou wolt the sothé
wite,

Behold a talé which is write,
How that the king Agámenon
Whan he the citee of Leshon
Hath won, a maiden there he fonde
Which was the fairest of the londe
In thilké timé that men wist.
He toke of hiré what him list
Of thing which was most precíous,
Wherof that she was daungerous.
This fairé maiden clepéd is
Criseid, the doughter of Crisís,
Which was that timé speciáll
Of thilké temple principáll
Where Phebus had his sacrifice,
So was it well the moré vice.
Agámenon was than in way
To Troié ward and toke away
This maiden, whiche he with him
lad,

So greaté lust in her he had.

But Phebus which hath great
disdein

Of that his maiden was forlein,
Anone as he to Troié came,

Vengeaúnce upon this dedé he
name¹

And send a comune pestilence.
They soughten than her evidence
And maden calculación,
To knowe in what condición
This deth cam in so sodeinly,
And atté lasté redely
The cause and eke the man they
founde,

And forth withal the samé stounde
Agámenon opposéd was,
Whiche hath beknownen all the cas
Of the folé, which he wrought.
And therupon mercý they sought
Toward the god in sondry wise
With praier and with sacrifice ;
The maiden home ayein they sende
And yaf her good inough to spende
For ever while she shuldé live,
And thus the sinné was foryive
And all the pestilencé cased.

"Lo, what it is to ben encresed
Of lové whiche is evil wonne.
It weré better nought begonne
Than take a thing withouté leve
Which thou must after nedés leve
And yet have malgré forth with all,
Forthý to robben over all
In lovés cause if thou beginne,
I not what esé thou shalt winne.
My soné, be well ware of this,
For thus of robbery it is."—

"My fader, your ensamplarie
In lovés cause of robberie
I have it right well understonde.
But over this how so it stonde,
Yet wol I wite of your apprise,
What thing is more of Covetise.

With Covetisé yet I finde
A servaunt of the samé kinde,
Which Stelth is hote, and micheirie²
With him is ever in compaignie.
Of whom if I shall tellé soth

¹ Ago, gone.

¹ Name, took.

² Micherie, secrecy.

He stalketh as a peacock doth
 And taketh his prei^e so covérte,
 That no man wote it in apérte.
 For whan he wot the lord from home
 Than wolle he stalke about and come,
 And what thing he fínt in his wey
 Whan that he seeth the men away
 He steleth it and goth forth withall
 That therof no man knowé shall.
 And eke full ofte he goth anight
 Withouté mone or sterré light
 And with his craft the dore unpi^keth
 And taketh therinne what him liketh.
 And if the doré be so shet,
 That he be of his entré let,
 He wolle in atté window crepe,
 And while the lord is fast aslepe,
 He steleth what thing him best list,
 And goth his wey er it be wist.
 Full ofte also by light of day
 Yet wolle he stele and make assay,
 Under the cote his honde he put
 Till he the mannés purs have kut
 And rifleth that he fínt therinne.
 And thus he auntreth him to winne
 And bereth an horn and nought ne
 bloweth

For no man of his counseil knoweth
 What he may get of his miching,
 It is all bile¹ under the wing.
 And as an hound that goth to folde
 And hath there také what he wolde
 His mouth upon the gras he wipeth,
 And so with feigné chere him
 slipeth,
 That what as ever of shepe he
 strangle
 There is no man therof shall jangle
 And for to knowen who it dede;
 Right so doth stelthe in every stede,
 Where as him list his prei^e take.
 He can so well his causé make
 And so well feigne and so well glose
 That there ne shall no man suppose

¹ Bile, bill.

But that he were an innocent,
 And thus a mannés eye he blent.
 So that this craste I may remeve¹
 Withouten helpe of any meve.
 There be lovers of that degre,
 Which all her lust in priveté
 As who saith gotten all by Stelth
 And ofte atteignen to great welth
 As for the timé that it lasteth.
 For love awaiteth ever and casteth
 How he may stele and cacche his
 pray

Whan he therto may finde a way.
 For be it night, or be it day
 Hetaketh his part, whan that he may,
 And if he may no moré do
 Yet wolle he stele a cuss² or two.
 "My soné, what saist thou therto,
 Telle, if thou diddest ever so."—
 "My fader, how?"—"My soné,
 thus,

If thou hast stolen any cuss
 Or other thing which therto longeth,
 For no man suché theves hongeth;
 Tell on forthy and say the trowth."—
 "My fader, nay; and that is
 routh,
 For by my will I am a thefe,
 But she that is to me most lefe,
 Yet durst I never in priveté
 Nought onés take her by the kne
 To stele of her or this or that,
 And if I durst I wot well what.
 And nethéles but if I lie
 By stelthé ne by robberie
 Of lové, which fell in my thought,
 To hire did I never nought;
 But as men sain, where hert is failed
 There shall no castel be assailed.
 But though I haddé hertés ten
 And were as stronge as allé men,
 If I be nought min owné man
 And dare nought usen that I can,

¹ Remeve, change to another field of enter-
 prise; from Money to Love.

² Cuss, kiss.

I may my selvé nought recouer
 Though I be never man so pouer.
 I bere an herte and here it is,
 So that me faileth wit in this
 How that I shulde of mine accorde
 The servant lede ayein the lorde.
 For if my foot wold owhere go,
 Or that min hond wolde ellés do,
 Whan that min hert is there ayein
 The remenaunt is all in vein.
 And thus me lacketh alle wele,
 And yet ne dare I nothing stele
 Of thing which longeth unto love,
 And eke it is so high above
 I may nought well therto arecche,
 But if so be at time of speche
 Full selde if than I stelé may
 A worde or two and go my way.
 Betwene her ligh estate and me
 Comparison there may none be,
 So that I fele and well I wote
 All is to hevy and to hote
 To set on hondé without leve.
 And thus I mot alगतé leve
 To stelé that I may nought take,
 And in this wise I mot forsake
 To ben a thefe ayein my will
 Of thing which I may nought fulfill.

“For that serpént which never
 slept

The flees of gold so well ne kept
 In Colchos, as the tale is tolde,
 As my lady a thousand folde
 To kepe her body night and day.
 She hath a wardein redy ay,
 Which is so wounderfull a wight,
 That him ne may no mannés might
 With swerd newith nowepondaunt,
 Ne with no sleight of charme en-
 chaunt

Wherof he might be madé tame,
 And Daunger is his righté name,
 Whiche under lock and under key,
 That no man may it stele away,
 Hath al the tresor underfonge

That unto lové may belonge.
 The lesté loking of her eye
 May nought be stole, if he it sigh;
 And who so gruccheth for so lite
 He woldé soné set a wite
 On him that woldé stelé more.
 And that me greveth wonder sore,
 For this proverþ is ever newe,
 That strongé lockés maken trewe
 Of hem that wolden stele and pike.
 For so wel can there no man slike¹
 By him ne by no other mene,
 To whom Daungér wol yive or lene
 Of that tresór he hath to kepe.
 So though I woldé stalke and crepe
 And waite on eve and eke on morwe,
 Of Daunger shal I nothing borwe,
 And stelé wot wel may I nought.
 And thus I am right wel bethought,
 While Daunger stont in his office,
 Of Stelthé, which ye clepe a Vice,
 I shall be gilty never mo.
 Therfore I wold he were ago
 So fer that I never of him herde
 How so that afterward it ferde,
 For than I mighté yet par cas
 Of lové maké some purchas
 By stelth or by some other way,
 That now fro me stont fer away.

“But, fader, as ye tolde above,
 How Stelthé goth anight for love,
 I may nought wel that point forsake,
 That ofté times I ne wake
 On nightés whan that other slepe.
 But now, I pray you také kepe,
 Whan I am loggéd in such wise
 That I by nighté may arise
 At some windów and loken out
 And se the housing al about,
 So that I may the chambre knowe
 In which my lady, as I trowe,
 Lith in her bed and slepeth softe,
 Than is min hert a thefe ful ofte,
 For there I stondé to behold

¹ Sinooth the way.

The longé nightés that ben cold
 And thenke on her that lieth there.
 But atté lasté whan I finde
 That I am fall into my minde,
 And se that I have stondé longe
 And have no profit underfonge,
 Than stalke I to my bed withinne.
 And this is all that ever I winne
 Of lové, whan I walke on night.
 My will is good, but of my might
 Me lacketh both and of my grace,
 For what so that my thought embrace

Yet have I nought the better ferde.
 My fader, lo, now have ye herde
 What I by Stelth of Love have do,
 And how my will hath be therto ;
 If I be worthy to penaunce,
 I put it to your ordenaunce.”—

“ My sone, of stelth I the behete,
 Though it be for a timé swete,
 At ende it doth but litel good,
 As by ensample how that it stood
 Whilom, I may the tellé now.”—

“ I pray you, fader, say me
 how.”—

“ My sone, of him, which goth
 by day

By wey of stelthé to assay
 In lovés cause and taléth his pray,
 Ovidé said, as I shau say,
 And in las Methamor he tolde
 A talé which is good to holde.

The poet upon this matere
 Of Stelthe wrote in this manere.
 Venus, which hath the lawe in honde
 Of thing which may nought be with-
 stonde,

As she which the tresór to warde
 Of lové hath within her warde,
 Phebus to love hath so constrained
 That he withouté rest is peined
 With all his herté to coveite
 A maiden which was warded streite
 Withinné chambre and kept so clos

That selden was whan she desclos
 Goth with her moder for to play.
 Leucothoë, so as men say,
 This maiden hight, and Orchamus
 Her fader was. And befell thus,
 This doughter that was kept so dere
 And haddé be from yere to yere,
 Upon the whose nativité
 Of comeliheed and of beauté
 Nature hath set all that she may,
 That lich unto the fresshé May,
 Whiche other monthes of the yere
 Sourmounteth, so withouté pere
 Was of this maiden the fetüre,
 Wherof Phebús out of mesure
 Her loveth and on every side
 Awaiteth what so may betide.
 In his await so longe he lay
 Till it befell upon a day
 That he through out her chambre
 wall

Came in all sodeinlich and stall
 That thing which was to him so
 lefe.

But wo the while, he was a thefe,
 For Venus, which was enemy
 Of thilké lovés michery,
 Discovereth all the pleiné cas
 To Climené, which thanné was
 Toward Phebús his concubine.
 And she, to letté the covine
 Of thilké lové, dedely wrothe,
 To pleign upon this maide she goth
 And tolde her fader howe it stond,
 Wherof for sorwe well nigh wode
 Unto her moder thus he saide :
 ‘ Lo, what it is to kepe a maide.
 To Phebus dare I nothing speke
 But upon her it shall be wreke.’
 And bad with that do make a pit,
 Wherin he hath his doughter set,
 As he that woll no pité have,
 So that she was all quike begrave
 And deide anone in his presence.
 But Phebus, for the reverence

"Of that she haddé be his love,
Hath wrought through his powér
above

That she sprong up out of the molde
Into a flour, was naméd Golde,
Which stant govérnéd of the sonne.
And thus whan love is evil wonne,
Full ofte it cometh to repentail."—

"My fader, that is no merveile,
Whan that the counceil is bewreied.
For in your tale as it betid,
Venus discovereth all the cas,
And eke also brode day it was
Whan Phebus such a stelthé
wrought,

Wherof the maide in blame he
brought,

That afterwards he was so lore.
But for ye saiden now to-fore,
How Stelth of Lové goth by night
And doth his thingés out of sight,
Therof me lust also to here
A talé lich to the matere,
Wherof I might ensample take."

"My godé soné, for thy sake,
So as it befell by daies olde
And so as the poét it tolde,
Upon the nightés michery
Now herken a tale of poesy.

The mightiest of allé men,
Whan Hercules with Eolen,
Which was the love of his coráge,
To-gider upon a pelrinage
Towardé Romé shulden go,
It fell hem by the waié so,
That they upon a day a cave
Within a roché founden have,
Which was réal and glorious
And of entailé curioús,
By name and Thophis it was hote.
The sonné shone tho wonder hote,
As it was in the somer tide.

"**This Hercules**, which by his side
Hath Eolen his lové there,
Whan they at thilké cavé were,

He said, he thought it for the best,
That she her for the heté rest
All thilké day. And so befell,
This cavé was under the hill
Of Tímolus, which was begrowe
With vinés, and at thilké throwe
Faunus with Saba the goddessse,
By whom the largé wildernessse
In thilké timé stood govérnéd,
Were in a place, as I am lerned,
Nigh by, which Bachus wodé hight.

"**This Faunus** toke a great insight
Of Eolen, that was so nigh,
For whan that he her beauté sigh,
Out of his wit he was assoted
And in his herte it hath so noted,
That he forsoke the nimphés alle
And said, he wolde, how so it falle,
Assay an other for to winne,
He set his hertes thought withinne.
And therupon his time awaiteth.
Now take good hede, how love
affaiteth

Him which withal is overcome.
Faire Eolen whan she was come
With Hercules into the cave,
She said him, that she wolde have
His clothés of and hire bothe,
Andeche of hem shulde oother clothe.
And all was do right as she bad,
He bath her in his clothés clad
And cast on her his gulton,
Which of the skin of a leon
Was made, as he upon the wey
It slough, and over this to pley
She toke his greté mace also
And knet it at her girdel tho.
So was she lich the man arraied,
And Hercules than hath assaied
To clothen him in her array.
And thus they japé forth the day,
Till that her souper redy were.
And whan they hadden soupéd there,
They shopen hem to go to rest,
And as it thought hem for the best,

They bad, as for that ilké night,
Two sondry beddés shuld be dight,
Wherin that they to resté gone
Eche by hem self in sondry place.
Fair Eolen hath set the mace
Besides her beddés heved above,
And with the clothés of her love
She helléd¹ all her bed aboute.
And he, which had nothing in
doubte,

Her wimpel wonde about his cheke,
Her kirtel and her mantel eke
Abrode upon his bed he spredde,
And thus they slepen both a bedde.
And what of travaill, what of wine
The servaunts like to dronkenswine
Beganne for to routé² faste.

This Faunus, which his stelthé caste,
Was thanné comen to the cave
And found, they weren alle save;
Withouté noise and in he went,
The derké night his sighté blent,
And yet it hapned him to go
Where Eolen a beddé tho
Was laid aloné for to slepe.

But for he woldé take kepe
Whose bed it was, he made assay
And of a leon where it lay
The cote he founde and eke hefeleth
The mace, and than his hertékeleth,
That theré durst he nought abide;
But stalketh upon every side
And sought abouté with his honde
That other bed, till that he fonde
Where lay bewimpled a viságe.
Tho was he glad in his coráge,
For he her kirtel founde also
And eke her mantel bothé two
Bespred upon the bedde alofte,
And wendé well it weré she.
And thus in stede of Eolé
Anone he profreth him to love,
But he, which sigh a man above,
This Hercules him threw to grounde

¹ *Helléd*, covered.² *Routé*, snore.

So soré, that they have him founde
Liggendé there upon the morwe,
And tho was nought a litel sorwe
That Faunus of him selvé made.
But ellés there they were all glade
And loughen him to scorne aboute,
Saba with nimphés all a route
Camedown to loke how that it ferde,
And whan that they the sothé herde
He was bejapéd over all.

“My soné, be thou ware with all
In aunter if the so betide
As Faunus didé thilké tide,
Wherof thou might beshaméd so.”—

“Min holy fader, certes no.
But if I haddé right good leve,
Such micherie I thenké leve.
My fainté herté woll nought serve,
For malgré wolde I nought deserve
In thilké placé where I love.
But for ye tolden here above
Of Covetise and his pilage,
If there be more of that lignage,
Which toucheth to my shrifte, I
pray,

That ye therof me woldé say,
So that I may the Vice escheue.”—

“My sone, if I by order sue
The Vices as they stonde a rowe,
Of Covetisé thou shalt knowe,
There is yet one, which is the last,
In whom there may no Vertue last,
For he with God him self debateth,
Wherof that all the heven him
hateth.

The highé God, whiche allé good
Purveié hath for mannés food
Of clothés and of mete and drinke,
Bade Adam, that he shuldé swinke
To geten him his sustenance,
And eke he set an ordenaunce
Upon the lawe of Moises,
That though a man be havéles,
Yet shall he nought by thefté stie.
But now a daiés there ben fele,

That woll no labour undertake ;
 But what they may by stelhé take
 They holde it sikerliché wonne.
 And thus the lawe is overronne,
 Which God hath set, and namély
 With hem that so untruély
 The goodés robbe of Holy Chirche.
 The thefté, which they thanné
 wirche,

By name is cleped Sacrilege,
 Ayein the whom I thenke allegge.
 Upon three points as we ben taught
 Stont Sacrilege, and ellés nought.
 The firsté point is for to say,
 Whan that a thefe shall stele away
 The holy thing from holy place.
 The seconde is, if he purcháce
 By way of theft an holy thinge
 The whiche upon his knowlechinge
 Fro holy place away was toke.
 The thirdé point, as saith the boke,
 Is suche, as whereas ever it be,
 In wode, in felde, or in cite,
 Shall no man stelé by no wise
 That halowed is to the servise
 Of God whiche allé thingés wote.
 But there is nouthér cold né hote,
 Whiche he for God or man woll
 spare,

So that the body may wel fare
 And that he may the world escape.
 The heven him thinketh is but a jape
 Of his condición to telle,
 Which rifeleth bothe boke and belle,
 So forthwith all the remenaunt
 To Goddés hous appurtenaunt,
 Where that he shuldé bid his bede,
 He doth his theft in holy stede,
 And taketh what thing he fint therin.
 For whan he seeth that he may win
 He wondeth for no cursednesse
 That he ne breketh the holinesse
 And doth to God no reverence.
 For he hath lost his consciéce,
 That though the prest therforé curse,

He saith, he fareth nought the
 worse.

And for to speke it other wise,
 What man that lasseth the fraun-
 chise

And taketh of Holy Chirch his pray,
 I not what bedés he shall pray
 Whan hefro God which hath yive all
 The purpartie in speciáll,
 Which unto Crist him self is due,
 Beninth; he may nought wel eschue
 The peiné comend afterward,
 For he hath made his foréward
 With sacrilegge for to dwelle,
 Which hath his heritage in helle.

“And if we rede of tholde lawe,
 I findé write in thilké lawe,
 Of princes how there weren thre
 Coupáble sore in this degre.
 That one of hem was clepéd thus
 The proudé king Antiochus ;
 That other Nabuzardan hight,
 Which of his cruelté behight
 The temple to destruie and waste,
 And so he did in allé haste ;
 The thridde, which was after
 shamed,

Was Nabugodonósor named,
 And he Jerusalem put under
 Of sacrilege and many a wonder
 There in the holy temple he wrought,
 Which Baltazár his heire abought,
 Whan Mane Techel Phares write
 Was on the wall, as thou might wite
 So as the bible it hath declared.
 But for al that it is nought spared
 Yet now a day that men ne pille
 And maken argument and skille
 To sacrilege as it belongeth,
 For what man that there after
 longeth

He taketh none hede what he doth.
 And if a man shall tellé soth,
 Of guile and of subtilité
 Is none so sligh in his degre

To feigne a thing for his beyete
 As is this Vice of whiche I trete.
 He can so priveliché pike,
 He can so well his wordés slike
 To put away suspiciön,
 That in his excusatiön
 There shall no man defalté finde.
 And thus full ofté men be blinde,
 That stonden in his word deceived,
 Er his queintisé be perceived.
 But nethéles yet other while
 For all his sleight and all his guile
 Of that he wolde his werke forsake,¹
 He is atteint and overtake.
 Wherof thou shalte a talé rede,
 In Rome as it befell in dede.

Er Romé cam to the craunce
 Of Crístés feith, it fell perchaunce,
 Cesár, which tho was emperour,
 Him listé for to done honoúr
 Unto the temple Apollinis,
 And made an ymage upon this,
 The which was clepéd Apolló,
 Was none so riche in Romé tho²
 Of plate of golde a berde he hadde,
 Thewhich his brest all over spradde
 Of golde also withouté faile
 His mantell was of large entaile
 Beset with perrie³ all about,
 Forth right he straught his finger
 out

Upon the which he had a ringe,
 To seen it was a riché thing
 A fine carbuncle for the nones
 Most precíous of alle stones.

“And fell that time in Romé thus
 There was a clerke one Lucius,
 A courteóur, a famous man,
 Of every wit somewhat he can,
 Out také that him lacketh reule
 His owne estat to guide and reule.
 How so it stood of his spekíng,
 He was nought wise in his doíng.

¹ Forsake, deny.² Tho, then.³ Perrie, precious stones.

But every riote atté last
 Mot nedés falle, and may nought
 laste.

After the mede of his deserte
 So fell this clerke into pouerte
 And wisté nought how for to rise,
 Wherof in many a sondry wise
 He cast his wittés here and ther,
 He loketh nigh, he loketh fer,
 Till on a timé that he come
 Into the temple, and hedé he nome
 Where that the god Apollo stood,
 He sigh the richesse and the good
 And thought he woldé by some way
 The tresor picke and stele away;
 And therupon so sleighly wrought
 That his propósito about he brought,
 And went awey unápperceived.
 Thus hath the man his god deceived;
 His ring, his mantel and his berd,
 As he which nothing was aferd,
 All privély with him he bare.
 And whan the wardeins weren ware
 Of that her god despuilé was,
 Hemi thought it was a wonder cas
 How that a man for any wele
 Durst in so holy placé stele,
 And namély so great a thing.
 This talé came unto the king,
 And was through spoken over all.
 But for to knowe in speciall,
 What maner man hath do the dede,
 They soughten helpe upon the
 nede

And maden calculaciön,
 Wherof by demonstraciön
 The man was foundé with the good;
 In jugément and whan he stood,
 The king hath axéd of him thus:
 ‘Say thou, unsely Lucius,
 Why hast thou don this sacri-
 legge?’—

‘My lord, if I the cause allegge,
 Quod he ayein, me thenketh this,
 That I have do nothing amis.

Three points ther ben, which I have
do :

Wherof the firsté point stant so,
That I the ring have take away ;
As unto that, this woll I say,
Whan I the god behelde about,
I sigh how he his hond straught out
And profred me the ring to yive.
And I, which woldé gladly live
Out of pouerte, through his largesse
It underfang, so that I gesse
As therof I am nought to wite.¹
And overmore I woll me quite
Of gold that I the mantel toke ;
Gold in his kind, as saith the boke,
Is hevy both and colde also.
And for that it was hevy so.
Me thought it was no garnément
Unto the god convenient
To clothen him the somer tide.
I thought, upon that other side,
Howgold is colde, and such a clothe
By reson oughté to be lothe
In winter timé for the chele.
And thus thenkéndé thoughtés fele
As I min eie abouté cast,
His largé berd than atté last
I sigh, and thought anone therfore,
How that his fader him before
Which stood upon the samé place,
Was berdles with a yongly face.
And in such wise, as ye have herde,
I toke away the sonés berde
For that his fader haddé none
To make hem liche, and hereupon
I axé for to ben excused.²

“Lothus, wheresacrilegeisused,
A man can feigne his conscience
And right upon such evidence
In Lovés cause if I shall tete,
There ben of suché small and great,
If they no leiser finden elles
They wol nought wonden for the
belles,

¹ To wite, to blame.

Ne though they sen the prest at
masse,

That wol they leten overpasse,
If that they finden her love there
They stande and tellen in her ere
And axe of God none other grace
While they ben in that holy place.
But er they gon some avauntáge
There will they have and some
piláge

Oí goodly word or of behesté,
Or ellés they take atté leste
Out of her honde a ring or glove,
So nigh the weder they will hove,
As who saith she shall nought for-
yete

Now I this token of her have gete.
Thus halwe they the highé feste,
Such thefté may no chirch areste,
For all is lefull that hem liketh,
To whom that ellés it misliketh.
And eke right in the selvé kinde
In greaté citees men may finde
This lusty folk that make hem gay
And waite upon the haliday,
In chirches and in minstres eke
They gon the women for to seke,
And where that such one goth about
To-fore the fairest of the route
Where as they sitten all a rewe,
There will he moste his body shewe,
His croket¹ kempt and theron set
An ouché² with a chapélet
Or ellés one of grené leves
Which laté came oute of the greves,
All for he shuldé semé fressh.
And thus he loketh on his flessch
Right as an hawke which hath a sight
Upon the fowl there he shall light,
And as he were a fairie
He sheweth him to-fore her eye
In holy place where they sitte

¹ Croket, croquet, a large roll of crossed hair
once in the fashion.

² Ouché, jewel, or jewel setting . . . greves,
groves.

Al. for to make her hertés flitte.
His eyé no where woll abide
But loke and pry on every side
On her and her, as him best liketh,
And other while among he siketh;
Thenketh one of hem 'That was
for me!'

And so there thenken two or thre
And yet he loveth none of alle,
But where as ever his chauncé falle;
And nethéles to say a soth
The causé why that he so doth,
Is for to stele an herte or two
Out of the chirche er that he go.
And as I said it here above,
All is that sacrilegge of love,
For well may be he steleth away
That he never after yeldé may.
Tell me forthý, my sone, anone,
Hast thou do sacrilege or none
As I have said in this manere?"—

"My fader, as of this matere
I woll you tellen redely
What I have do, but truély
I may excuse^e min entent,
That I never yet to chirché went
In such manér as ye me shrive,
For no womán that is on live,
The causé why I have it laft
May be for I unto that craft
Am nothing able for to stele,
Though there be women nought so
• fele.

But yet woll I nought saié this
Whan I am there my lady is,
In whom lith holy my quaréle,
And she to chirche or to chapéle
Woll go to matins or to messe
That time I waité well and gesse,
To chirche I come, and there I
stonde,

And though I take a boke on honde
My contenance is on the boke
But toward her is all my loke.
And if so fallé, that I pray

Unto my God and somewhat say
Of *Pater Noster* or of *Crede*
All is for that I woldé spede,
So that my bede in holy chirche
There mighté some mirácle wirche
My ladies herté for to chaunge,
Which ever hath be to me so
straunge;

So that all my devociön
And all my contemplaciön
With all min herte and my coráge
Is only set on her ymáge.
And ever I waite upon the tide
If she loke any thing aside,
That I me may of her avise;
Anone I am with Covetise
So smité that me weré lefe
To be in holy chirche a thefe,
But nought to stele a vestémēt
For that is nothing my talént.
But I wol stele if that I might
A glad word or a goodly sight,
And ever my servíce I profre,
And namely whan she woll gone
offre,

For than I lede her, if I may.
For somewhat wold I stele away
Whan I beclippe her on the waste,
Yet atté last I stele a taste,¹
And other while 'graunt mercy'
She saith, and so win I therby
A lusty touch, a good worde eke,
But all the remenaunt to seke
Is fro my purpos wonder fer.
So may I say, as I said er,
In holy chirch if that I wowe,
My consciéce I wolde allowe
Be so that up amendémēt
I mighté get assignémēt
Where for to spede in other place;
Such sacrilege I hold a grace.

"And thus, my fader, soth to say
In chirché right as in the way

¹ *Taste*, touch (*titter*). So a knight might
in the old romances taste his horse; or a
damsel taste a hero's wound

If I might ought of lové take
 Such hansel have I nought forsake.
 But finally I me confesse,
 There is in me no halinesse
 While I her se in haly stede.
 And yet for ought that ever I dede
 No sacrilegge of her I toke
 But if it were of worde or loke
 Or ellés if that I her fredde¹
 Whan I toward offring her ledde,
 Také therof what I take may
 For ellés bere I nought away,
 For though I wolde ought ellés have
 All other thingés ben so save
 And kept with such a privilegge
 That I may do no sacrilegge;
 God wot my willé nethéles.
 Though I must nedés kepé pees
 And malgré min so let it passe,
 My will therto is nought the lasse,
 If I might other wise away.
 Forthý, my fader, I you pray,
 Tell what you thenketh therupon,
 If I therof have gilt or none."

"Thy will, my sone, is for to blame,

The remenaunt is but a game
 That I have herd the tellé yit.
 But take this lore into thy wit,
 That allé thing hath time and stede,
 The chirche serveth for the bede.²
 The chambre is of an other speche;
 But if thou wistest of the wreche
 How sacrilegge it hath abought,
 Thou woldest better ben bethought.
 And for thou shalt the more amende,
 A tale I will on the despende.

"**G**o all men as whosaiþ knowe
 It is, and in the world through blowe,
 How that of Troié Lamedón
 To Hercules and to Jasón,
 Whan toward Colchos out of Grece
 By see sailénd, upon a piece
 Of londe of Troié resté preide.

¹ *Fredde*, felt.

² *Bede*, prayer.

But he hem wrothfully congeide,¹
 And for they found him so villen,
 Whan they came into Grece ayein
 With power that they getté might
 Towardés Troié they hem dight
 And there they token such ven-
 geaunce,
 Wherof stant yet the remembraunce.
 For they destruiéd king and all
 And lesten but the brenté wall,
 The Grekes of Troians many slow²
 And prisoners they toke inow,
 Among the whiché there was one
 The kingés doughter Lamedon
 Esone the fairé thing,
 Which unto Thelamon the king
 By Hercules and by thassent
 Of all the holé parlément
 Was at his willé yove and graunted.
 And thus hath Grece Troié daunted,
 And home they torne in such manére.
 But after this, now shalt thou here
 The cause, why I this talé telle,
 Upon the chaunce that befelle.

"King Lamedon, which deide
 thus,

He had a sone one Priamus,
 Which was nought thilké time at
 home,
 But whan he herd of this, he come
 And found how the citee was falle,
 Which he began anon to walle
 And madé there a citee newe,
 That they which other londés knewe
 Tho saiden that of lime and stone
 In all the world so faire was nonc.
 And on that o side of the town
 The king let maken Ylion,
 That highé toure, that strongé place,
 Which was adrad of no manáce
 Of quarele nor of none engne.
 And though men woldé make amine,
 No mannés craft it might approche,
 For it was set upon a roche

¹ *Congeide*, expelled.

² *Slow*, slew.

The wallés of the towne about,
 Hemstood of all the world no doubt.
 And after the proportioun
 Six gatés were there of the town
 Of such a forme of such entaile
 That hem to se was great merveile.
 The dichés weren brode and depe,
 A fewé men it mighté kepe
 From all the world, as semeth tho
 But if² the goddés weren fo.
 Great prees unto that citee drough,
 So that there was of people inough
 Of burgeis that therinné dwellen,
 There may no mannés tunge tellen,
 How that citee was riche and good.

"Whan all was made and all
 well stood,

King Priamus tho him bethought
 What they of Greccé whilom wrought,
 And what was of hers werd devoured,
 And how his suster deshonoúred
 With Thelamon away was lad.
 And tho thenkénd he wex unglad
 And set anone a parlément
 To which the lordés were assent.³
 In many wisé there was spoke,
 How that they mighten bene awroke,
 But atté lasté nethéles
 They saiden all accorde and pecs;
 To setten every parte in rest
 It thought hem thanné for the best
 With resonáble amendément.
 And thus was Anthenor forth sent
 To axen Esióna ayein
 And witen what they wolden sain.

"So passeth he the sec by barge
 To Greccé for to say his charge,
 The which he saidé redely
 Unto the lordés by and by.⁴
 But where he spake in Grece aboute,

He herdé nought but wordés stoute
 And naméliche of Thelamon.
 The maiden wolde he nought forgon,
 He saidé, for no maner thing,
 And bad him gone home to his king,
 For theré gat he none amende
 For ough he couthé do or sende.

"This Anthenór ayein goth home
 Unto his king, and whan he come,
 He tolde in Grece of that he herde,
 And how that Thelamon answerde,
 And how they were at her above,
 That they wol nouthér pees né love
 But every man shall done his best,
 But for men sain, that night hath
 rest,

The king bethought him all that
 night,

And erly whan the day was light
 He toke counseil of this matére,
 And they accorde in this manére,—
 That he withouten any let
 A certain timé shuldé set
 A parlément to ben avised,
 And in this wise it was avised.
 Of parlément he set a day,
 And that was in the month of May.
 This Priamus had in his ight¹
 A wife, and Hecuba she hight,
 By whom at that time eke had he
 Sonés five and doughters thre
 Besiden hem and thritty mo,
 And weren knightés alle tho²
 But nought upon his wife begete,
 But ellés where he might hem gete
 Of women which he haddé knowe.
 Such was the world that ilké throwe,
 So that he was of children riche
 So therof was no man him liche.

Of parlément the day was come.
 There ben the lordés all and some,
 Tho was pronouncéd and purposed
 And all the cause hem was des-
 closed,

¹ Doubt, fear.

² But if, unless.

³ Assent, sent for, summoned.

⁴ By and by, immediately. "By and by," "presently," "anon," and some other words of promptitude, have grown into senses that express some little delay.

¹ Ight, possession.

² Tho, those.

How Anthenór in Grece ferde.
 They sitten allé still and herde,
 And tho spake every man aboute ;
 There was alleggé many a doubte,
 And many a proud word spoke also.
 But for the mosté parte as tho
 They wisten nought what was the
 beste

Or for to werre or for to reste.
 But he that was withouté fere,¹
 Hector, among the lordés there
 His talé tolde in suche a wise
 And saidé : ' Lordés, ye ben wise,
 Ye knowen this als well as I,
 Above all other most worthy
 Stant now in Grece the manhod
 Of worthinesse and of knighthod.
 For who so woll it wel agrope,
 To hem belongeth all Europe,
 Whiche is the thriddé parte evén
 Of all the world undér the hevén.
 And we be but of folk a fewe,
 So were it respn for to shewe
 The peril er we fall therinne.
 Bet is to levé than beginne
 Thing whichas may nought ben
 acheved,

He is nought wise, that find him
 greved
 And doth so that his greve be more.
 For who that loketh all to-fore
 And woll nought se what is behinde,
 He may full ofte his harmés finde.
 Wickis to strive and have the worse,
 We have enchéson for to curse,
 This wote I well, and for to hate
 The Grekes, but er that we debate
 With hem that ben of such a might
 It is full good that every wight
 Be of him self right well bethought.
 But as for me thus say I nought,
 For while that my life woll stonde,
 If that ye také werre on honde,
 Fall it to the best or to the worst,

¹ Fere, companion, equal.

I shall my selven be the ferst
 To greven hem what ever I may.
 I woll nought onés saié nay
 To thing which that your counceyl
 demeth,

For unto me well more it quemeth
 The werré certés than the pees.
 But this I saié nethéles,
 As me belongeth for to say.
 Now shapé ye the besté way.'

"Whan Hector hath said his avis
 Next after him tho spake Parfs,
 Which was his brother, and alaide¹
 What him best thought, and thus
 he saide :

' Strong thing it is to suffré wronge,
 And suffré shame is moré stronge ;
 But we have suffred bothé two :
 And, for all that, yet have we do
 What so we mighté to reforme
 The pees, whan we in suche a forme
 Sent Anthenór, as ye wel knowe.
 And they her greté wordés blowe
 Upon her wrongfull dedés eke,
 And he that woll him self nought
 meke

To pees and list no reson take,
 Men sain resón him wol forsake.
 For in the multitude of men
 Is nought the strengthé, for with ten
 It hath be sene in true quaréle
 Ayein an hunderd falsé dele
 And had the better, of Goddés grace.
 Thus hath befallé in many place.
 And if it like unto you alle,
 I will assay how so it falle
 Our enemies if I may greve,
 For I have caught a gret beleve
 Upon a point I wol declare.

' This ender day as I gan fare
 To hunt unto the greté herte
 Which was to-fore min houndés
 sterte,
 And every man went on his side

¹ Alaide alleged.

Him to pursue, and I to ride
 Began to chase, and soth to say,
 Within a while, out of my way
 I rode, and nisté where I was,
 And slepé caught me and on the
 grasse

Beside a welle I laid me down
 To slepe, and in a visión
 To me the god Mercúrie cam,
 Goddesses thre with him he nam
 Minervé, Venus and Juno,
 And in his honde an appel tho
 He helde of gold with letters write.
 And this he didé me to wite
 How that they put hem upon me,
 That to the fairest of hem thre
 Of gold that appel shulde I yive.
 With ech of hem tho was I shrive
 And eche one fairé me behight.¹
 But Venus said, if that she might
 That appel of my yifté gete,
 She wolde it nevermore foryete;
 And saide, how that in Grecé londe
 She woldé bring into min honde
 Of all this érrhé the fairest:
 So that me thought it for the best
 To her and yaf the appel tho.
 Thus hope I well if that I go
 That she for me woll so ordeigne
 That they matéré for to pleigne
 Shull have or that I come ayein.
 Nowe have ye herd that I woll sain,
 Say ye what stant in your avis.²—
 And every man tho saidé his,
 And sondry causes they recorde,
 But atté lasté they accorde
 That Paris shall to Grecé wende.
 And thus the parlement toke ende.

“Cassandra whan she herd of this,
 The which to Paris suster is,
 Anone she gan to wepe and weile
 And said: ‘Alas, what may us eile,
 Fortúné with her blindé whele

Ne woll nought let us stonde wele,
 For this I dare well undertake,
 That if París his waie take,
 As it is said that he shall do,
 We ben for ever than undo.³—
 The which—Cassandra thanné hight
 In all the world as it bereth sight,—
 In bokés as men findé write,
 Is that Sibille of whom ye wite,¹
 That allé men yet clepen sage.
 Whan that she wist of this viage,
 How Paris shall to Grecé fare,
 No woman mighté worsé fare
 Ne sorwé moré than she did.
 And right so in the samé stede
 Ferd Helenus which was her brother,
 Of prophecy and such another,
 And all was holdé but a jape,
 So that the purpos which was shape,
 Or were hem lefe or were hem lothe,
 Was holde, and into Grece he goth,
 This Paris, with his retenaunce.
 And as it fell upon his chaunce,
 Of Grece he londeth in an ile,
 And him was told the samé while
 Of folk which he began to freine,²
 Tho was in thilé quene Heleine,
 And eke of contrés there about
 Of lādies many a lusty rout,
 With mochel worthy people also.
 And why they comen thider tho
 The causé stood in such a wise
 For worship and for sacrifice
 That they to Venus wolden make,
 As they to-fore had undertake,
 Some of good will, some of behest,
 For thanné was her highé fest
 Within a temple which was there.
 Whan Paris wisté what they were,
 Anone he shope his ordenaunce
 To gone and done his obeisaunce
 To Venus on her haliday
 And did upon³ his best array.

¹ *Fairé behight*, promised fairly, made fair promises.

¹ *Wite*, know. ² *Freine*, make inquiry.

³ *Did upon*, put on.

With great riches he him be-
honesth

As it to such a lord belongeth,
He was nought arméd ne theles,
But as it were in londe of pees.
And thus he goth forth out of ship
And taketh with him his felaship;
In such manere as I you say
Unto the Temple he helde his way.

"Tidingé, which goth over all
To grete and smallé forth withall,
Come to the quenés ere and tolde
How Paris come, and that he wolde
Do sacrificé to Venús.

And whan she herdé tellé thus,
She thought, how that it ever be,
That she wold him abide and se.

"Forth cometh Paris with glad
visagé

Into the Temple on pelrinage,
Where unto Venus the goddessse
He yiveth and offreth great richesse
And praieth her that he praié wolde.
And than aside he gan beholde,
And sigh where that this lady stood,
And he forth in his fresshé mood
Goth there she was, and made her
chere

As he well couth in his manére.
That of his wordés such plesaunce
She toke, that all her aqueintaunce
Als ferforth as the herté lay
He stale er that he went away.
So goth he forth and toke his leve
And thought anone, as it was eve,
He woldé done his sacrilege,
That many a man shulde it abegge.¹
Whan he to ship ayein was come
To him he hath his counsel nome²
And all deviséd the matere
In such a wise as thou shalt here.
Withinné night all privély
His men he warneth by and by
That they be redy arméd sone

¹ *Abegge*, abye, pay for.

² *Nome*, taken.

For certain thing whiche is to done.
And they anone ben redy alle
And echone other gan to calle
And went hem out upon the stronde
And toke a purpos there on londe
Of what thing that they wolden do,
Toward the Temple and forth
they go.

So fell it of devociön

Heleine in contemplaciön

With many an other worthy wight
Was in the Temple and woke all
night

To bid and pray unto thymäge
Of Venus, as was than usäge,
So that Paris right as him list
Into the Temple er they it wist
Came with his men all so deynly.
And all at onés set askry¹

In hem which in the Temple were,
For tho was mochel people there,
But of defencé was no bote,
So suffren they that suffre mote.
Paris unto the quené wente
And her in both his armés hente
With him and with his felaship
And forth they bere her into ship.
Up goth the saile, and forth they
went,

And suche a wind Fortune hem sent,
Till they the haven of Troié caught,
Where out of ship anone they
straught

And gone hem forth toward the town,
The which came with processiön
Aycin Paris to sene his pray.
And every man began to say
To Paris and his felaship
All that they couthen of worshíp,
Was none so litel man in Troy
That he ne madé merthe and joy
Of that Paris had wonne Heleine.
But all that merthe is sorwe and
peine

¹ *Askry*, screaming.

To Helenus and to Cassandre.
 For they it tolden¹ shame and
 sclaundre
 And loss of all the comun grace,
 That Paris out of haly place
 By stelth hath take a mannés wife,
 Wherof that he shall lese his life,
 And many a worthy man therto,
 And all the citee be fordo
 Which never shall be made aycin.
 And so it fell, right as they sain,
 The sacrilegge which he wrought
 Was causé why the Gregois sought
 Unto the town and it belay
 And wolden never part away
 Till what by sleight and what by
 strength
 They had it wonne in brede and
 length
 And brent and slain that was
 withinne.

“Now se, my soné, which a sinne
 Is sacrilegge in haly stede.
 Beware therefore, and bid thy hede²
 And do nothing in haly chirche
 But that thou might by reson wirche.
 And eke take hede of Achillés,
 Whan he unto his lové chees
 Polixená that was also
 In haly Temple of Ápolló,
 Which was the causé why he deide
 And all his lust was laid aside.
 And Troilus upon Creseide
 Also his firsté lové laide
 In haly place, and how it ferde
 As who saith all the world it herde.
 Forsake he was for Diomede,
 Such was of love his lasté mede.

“Forthy my sone, I woldé rede
 By this ensample as thou might rede
 Sechecllés where thou wilt thy grace
 And ware thee well, in haly place,
 What thou to lové do or speke

In aunter if it so be wreke¹
 As thou hast herd me tell to-fore,
 And take good hede also therefore.

Upon the forme of Avarice
 More than of any other Vice
 I have devided in parties
 The braunches, which of com-
 paignies
 Through out the world in generall
 Be now the leders over all
 Of Covetise and Perjurie,
 Of Fals Brocage and Usurie,
 Of Scarsenesse and of Unkinde-
 ship,
 Which never drough to felaship,
 Of Robberie and of Privé Stelth,
 Which done is for the worldés welth,
 Of Ravine and of Sacrilegge,
 Which maketh the conscience
 agregge;²

All though it may richesse atteigne,
 It floureth but it shall not greine
 Unto the fruit of rightwisesse.
 But who that woldé do Largesse
 Upon the reule as it is yive,
 So might a man in trouthe live
 Toward his God and eke also
 Toward the World, for bothé two
 Largesse awaiteth, as belongeth
 Toneither part that he ne wrongeth.
 He kepeth him self, he kepeth his
 frendes,

So stant he sauf to both his endes ;
 That he excedeth no mesure,
 So well he can him self mesure :
 Wherof, my soné, thou shalt wite³
 So as the philosophre hath write,

“Betwene the two extremités
 Of Vicé stont the propertés
 Of Vertue, and to prove it so
 Take Avarice and take also
 The Vice of Prodegalité,
 Betwene hem Liberalite,

¹ Tolden, accounted, reckoned.

² Bid thy hede, pray thy prayer.

¹ Wreke, avenged.

² Agregge, feel overburdened.

³ Wite, know.

Which is the Vertue of Largesse,
 Stant and govérneth his noblesse.
 For tho two Vices in discorde
 Stond ever, as I find of recorde;
 So that betwene her two debate
 Largessé reuleth his estate,
 For in such wise as Avarice,
 As I to-fore have told the Vice,
 Through streit holding and through
 scarsnesse

Stant as contrairé to largesse,
 Right so stant Prodegalité
 Revers, but nought in such degre.
 For so as Avaricé spareth
 And for to kepe his tresor careth,
 That other all his own and more
 Ayein the wisé mannés lore
 Yiveth and despendeth here and
 there,

So that him reccheth never where;
 While he may borwe he wold de-
 spende

Till atté last he saith: 'I wende.'¹
 But that is spoken all to late,
 For than is pouerte at the gate
 And taketh him even by the sieve,
 For erst wold he no wisdom leve.
 And right as Avarice is sinne,
 That wold his tresor kepe and winne,
 Right so is Prodegalité.

But of Largesse in his degre,
 Which even stant betwene the two,
 The highé God and man also
 The vertue eche of hem commen-
 deth.

For he him selven first amendeth,
 That over all his namé spiedeth,
 And to all other where it nedeth
 He yiveth his good in such a wise
 That he maketh many a man arise
 Which ellés shuldé fallé low.
 Largessé may nought be unknowe,
 For what lond that he regneth inne,

| It may nought failé for to winne
 and grace,
 her place.
 h and lite,
 t to wite,¹
 el way.
 .way

.é
 : Vice.
 ice
 his good

blame,
 t mesure

harm that

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 of colde,
 solde
 les

The mighty God of his encres
 Rewardeth him of double grace,
 The heven he doth him to purchase
 And yiveth him eke the worldés good.
 And thus the coté for the hood
 Largessé taketh, and yet no sinne
 He doth, how so that ever he winne.
 What man hatli hors, men yiven
 him hors,
 And who ne hath, of him no force,²
 For he may thenne on foté go;
 The world hath ever stondé so.
 But for to loken of the tweie,

¹ *I wende*, I will turn (over a new leaf), will change my way.

¹ *To wite*, to be blamed

² *No force*, no matter.

A man to go the siker weie,
 Bet is to yive than to take,
 With yifte a man may frendés make,
 But who that taketh or great or small,
 He taketh a chargé forth with all
 And stant nought fre til it be quit.
 So for to deme in mannés wit,
 It helpeth more a man to have
 His owné good than for to crave
 Of other men and make him bonde
 Wher ellés he may stond unbonde.
 Senec counseileth in this wise
 And saith : ' But if the good suffice
 Unto the liking of the will,
 Withdrawe thy lust and hold the still
 And be to thy good suffisaunt,
 For that thing is appurtenaunt
 To trouthe and causeth to be fre
 After the reule of charité,
 Which first beginneth of him selve.
 For if thou richest other twelve.
 Wherof thou shalt thyself be pouer,
 Inot what thank thou might recouer.
 While that a man hath good to yive,
 With greaté routés he may live
 And hath his fiendés over all,
 And everich of him tellé shall,
 The while he hath his fullé packe.
 They say, ' A good felâw is Jacke.'
 But whan it faileth atté last,
 Anone his prise they overcast,
 For than is there none other lawe.
 But ' Jacké was a good felawe.'
 Whan they him pouer and nedý se,
 They let him passe and fare well he;
 Al that he wend of compaignie
 Is thanné torned to folie.

" But now to speke in other kinde
 Of Love, a man may suché finde,
 That where they come in every rout,
 They cast and wast her love about
 Till all her time is overgone,
 And thanné have they lové none.
 For he that loveth over all,
 It is no reson that he shall

Of love have any propreté.
 Forthý my sone, avisé the,
 If thou of love hast ben to large;
 For suche a man is nought to charge.
 And if it so be, that thou hast
 Despended al thy time in wast
 And set thy love in sondry place,
 Though thou the substaunce of thy
 grace

Lese at the last, it is no wonder,
 For he that put him selven under
 As who saith comun over all,
 He leseth the lové speciall
 Of any one, if she be wise.
 For lové shall nought bere his prise
 By reson, whan it passeth one.
 So have I sen full many one,
 That were of lové wel at ese,
 Which after fell in great disce
 Through wast of lové, that they spent
 In sondry places where they went.
 Right so, my sone, I axe of the,
 If thou with prodegalité
 Hast here and there thy lové
 wasted?"—

" My fader, nay, but I have tasted
 In many a place as I have go,
 And yet love I never one of tho
 But for to drivé forth the day.
 For leveth well, my hert is ay
 Withouté mo for evermore
 All upon one, for I no more
 Desiré but her love alone.
 So make I many a privé mone,
 For well I fele I have despended
 My longé love and nought amended
 My spede, for ought I findé yit.
 If this be wast, unto your wit,
 Of love and prodegalité,
 Now, godé fader, demeth ye.
 But of o thing I woll me shrive,
 That I shall for no lové thrive
 But if her self me woll relevé."—

" My sone, that I may well leve,"¹

¹ Love, believe.

And nethéles me semeth so
 For ought that thou hast yet misdo
 Of timé whiché thou hast spende,
 It may with gracé ben amended.
 For thing which may be worth the
 cost

Perchaunce is nouthér wast né lost,
 For what thing stant on aventúre
 That can no worldés créature
 Tell in certain how it shall wende
 Till he therof may sene an ende.
 So that I note¹ as yet therfore,
 If thou, my sone, hast wone or lore.
 For ofté time, as it is sene,
 Whan somer hath lost all his grene
 And is with winter wast and bare,
 That him is left nothing to spare,—

¹ *Note*, know not.

All is recovered in a throwe;
 The coldé windés overblowe,
 And stilléd ben the sharpé shoures,
 And sodeinlich ayein his floures
 The somer happneth, and is riche,
 And so parcas thy grace is liche.
 My soné, though thou be now pouer
 Of lové, yet thou might recouer.”—

“ My fader, certés graunt mercý,
 Ye have me taught so redily,
 That ever while I livé shall
 The bet I may be ware with all
 Of thing which ye have said er this.
 But evermore how that it is
 Toward my shrifte as it belongeth,
 To wit of other points me longeth,
 Wherof that ye me wolden teche
 With all min herte I you beseche.”

BOOK VII.

OF GLUTTONY.

The greté sinne originall,
Which every man in general
Upon his birth hath envenomed,
In Paradis it was mistimed,
Whan Adam of thilke appel bote,
His sweté morcel was to hote,
Which dedly¹ madé the mankinde.
And in the bokés as I finde
This Vicé, which so out of reule
Hath set us all, is clepéd Gule,
Of which the braunchés ben so great
That of hem all I wol nought treat,
But only as touchénd of two .
I thenké speke and of no mo.
Wherof the first is Dronkéship
Which bereth the cuppé felaship.
Ful many a wonder doth this Vice,
He can make of a wisman nice,
And of a fool that him shall seme
That he can all the lawé deme
And yiven every jugémént
Which longeth to the firmament
Both of the sterre and of the mone.
And thus he maketh a great clerk
sone
Of him that is a lewdé man.
There is no thing, whiche he ne can
While he hath dronkéship on honde,
He knoweth the see, he knoweth
the stronde,
He is a noble man of armes,—
And yet no strength is in his armes.

¹ *Dedly*, mortal.

There he was stronge inow to-fore
With dronkéship it is forlore,
And all is chaungéd his estate
And wext anone so feble and mate,¹
That he may nouthér go né come,
But all to-gider he is benome²
The power both of honde and fote
So that algate abide he mote,
And all his wittés he foryete.
The which is to him such a lete³
That he wot never what he doth,
Ne which is fals né which is soth,
Ne which is day né which is night,
As for the time he knoweth nowight⁴
That he né wot so moch as this—
What maner thing him selven is
Or he be man or he be beste.
That holde I right a sory feste,
Whan he that reson understode
So sodeinlich is woxé wode
Or elles lich the dedé man
Which nouthér go né speké can.
Thus ofte he is to beddé brought,
But where he lith yet wot he nought,
Till he arise upon the morwe
And than he saith, 'O, which a sorwe
It is for to be drinkéles,'
So that half drunke in such a rees
With drié mouth he sterte him up
And saith, 'Now *buillez ça* the cuppe.'

¹ *Mate*, dull, flat.

² *Benome*, deprived of.

³ *Lete*, hindrance.

⁴ *No wight*, no whit.

That made him lese his wit at eve
Is than a morwe all his beleve,
The cuppes all that ever him pleseth
And also that him most diseseth,
It is the cuppé whom he serveth,
Which allé carés from him kerveth
And all the balés to him bringeth.
Injoy he wepeth, in sorwe hesingeth,
For dronkéschip is so divers
It may no whilé stonde invers,
He drinketh the wine, but atté last
The wine drinketh him and bint
him fast

And laith him drunké by the walle
As him which is his bondé thralle
And all in his subjection.

And lich to such condición
As for to speke it otherwise
It falleth, that the mosté wise
Ben other while of Love adoted
And so bewhappéd and assoted ¹
Of dronken men that never yit
Was none which half so lost his wit
Of drinke, as they of such thing do
Which cleped is the jolif wo,
And waxen of her owné thought
So drunké that they knowé nought,
What reson is, or more or lesse.
Such is the kinde of that siknesse,
And that is nought for lacke of
braine,

But Love is of so great a maine ²
That where he taketh a herte on
honde,
There may no thúng his might with-
stonde.

The wisé Salomon was nome,
And strongé Sampson overcome,
The knightly David him ne might
Rescoué that he with the sight
Of Bersabé ne was bestade.
Virgile also was overlade,
And Aristotle was put under.

¹ *Bewhappéd and assoted*, knocked over and besotted.

² *Maine*, strength.

"Forthy my sone, it is no wonder,
If thou be drunke of Love amonge,
Which is above all other stronge.
And if so is that thou so be,
Tell me thy shrift in priveté,
It is no shame of such a thewe
A yong man to be dronkelewe.
Of such phisique I can a parte,
And as me semeth by that arte
Thou shuldest by phisonomý
Be shapen to that malady
Of lovéd drunk, and that is routhe."—

"Ha, holy fader, all is trouthe
That ye me telle, I am beknowe,
That I with Love am so bethrowe ¹
And al min herte is so through
sunke

That I am veriliché drunke,
And yet I may both speke and go.
But I am overcomé so
And tornéd fro my self so clene
That oft I wot nought what I mene,
So that excusen I ne may
My herté fro the firsté day
That I cam to my lady kith.²
I was yet sobre never sith,
Where ³ I her se or se her nought;
With musing of min owné thought
Of lové which min herte assaileth
So drunke I am that my wit faileth
And all my braine is overtorned,
And my maneré so mistorned,
That I foryete all that I can
And stondé like a maséd man,
That ofté whan I shuldé play
It maketh me drawe out of the way
In solein ⁴ placé by my selve,
As doth a laborér to delve
Which can no gentilmannés chere,⁵
Or ellés as a lewdé frere,
Whan he is put to his penaunce,

¹ *Bethrowe*, cast down.

² *Cam kith*, became known.

³ *Where*, whether.

⁴ *Solein*, single.

⁵ Who knows nothing of the good manners of a gentleman.

Right so lese I my contenaunce.
 And if it nedés so bétide,
 That I in compaigný abide,
 Where as I musté daunce and singe
 The hové-daunce¹ and carolinge,
 Or for to go the newé fote,
 I may nought wel heve up my fote,
 If that she be nought in the way.
 For than is all my merth away,
 And waxe anone of thought so full,
 Wherof my limmés ben so dull,
 I may unethés² gon the pas.
 For thus it is and ever was,
 Whan I on suché thoughtés muse,
 The lust and merthé that men use,
 Whan I se nought my lady by me,
 All is foryeté for the timé
 So ferforth that my wittés chaungen
 And allé lustés fro me straungen,
 That they sain allé truélý
 And swéré, that it am nought I.
 For as the man which ofté drinketh
 The wine that in his stomacks sinketh
 Wexth drunke, and witles for a
 throwe,
 Right so my lust is overthrowe,
 And of min owné thought so mate³
 I waxé, that to min estate
 There is no limné will me serve,
 But as a drunken man I swerve
 And suffre such a passiön,
 That men have great compassion
 And everich by him self mervcleth
 What thing it is that me so effleth.
 Such is the maner of my wo,
 Which timé that I am her fro,
 Till este ayein that I her se.
 But than it were, a nicété
 To tellé you how that I fare.
 For whan I may upon her stare,
 Her womanheed, her gentillesse,
 Min hert is full of such gladnesse
 That overpasseth so my wit

¹ *Hové-daunce*, court dance.

² *Unethés*, not easily.

³ *Mate*, dull, dead.

That I wot never where it sit,
 But am so drunken of that sight
 Me thenketh for the time I might
 Right sterté through the holé wall.
 And than I may well, if I shall,
 Both singe and daunce and lepe
 about

And holdé forth the lusty rout.
 But nethéles it falleth so
 Full ofté that I fro her go
 Ne may, but as it were a stake
 I stonde, avisément to take
 And loke upon her fairé face,
 That for the while out of the place
 For all the world ne might I wende.
 Such lust comth than into my
 minde,

So that withouté mete and drinke
 Of lusty thoughtés which I thinke,
 Me thenketh I mighté stonden ever.
 And so it weré to me lever
 Than such a sighté for to leve,
 If that she woldé yive me leve
 To have so mochel of my will.
 And thus thenkénd I stondé still
 Withouté blenching of min eye,
 Right as me thoughté that I sigh
 Of paradis the mosté joy.
 And so there while I me rejoy;
 Unto min herte a great desire
 The which is hotei than the fire
 All sodeinliche upon me renneth,
 That all my thought withinné bren-
 neth

And am so ferforth overcome
 That I not where I am become,
 So that among tho hertés stonge
 In stede of drinke I underfonge
 A thought so swete in my coráge,
 That never piment¹ ne vernage²
 Was half so sweté for to drinke.
 For as I wolde, than I thinke,

¹ *Piment*, wine with a third part of honey
 spiced with powder of cloves, mace, cinnamon,
 cubebs, and galingale.

² *Vernage*, a white wine.

As though I were at min above,
 For so through drunke I am of love,
 That all that my sotié demeth
 Is soth as than it to me semeth.
 And while I may tho thoughtés kepe
 Me thenketh as though I were aslepe
 And that I were in Goddés barme.¹
 But whan I se min owné harne
 And that I sodeinliche awake
 Out of my thought and hedé take
 How that the sothé stant in dede,
 Than is my sikernesse in drede
 And joié tornéd into wo,
 So that the hete is all ago
 Of such sotié as I was inne.
 And than ayeinward I beginne
 To take of love a newé thorst,
 The which me greveth alltherworst,
 Forthanné cometh the blanché fever
 With chele and maketh me so to
 chever²

And so it coldeth at min herte,
 That wonder is how I asterolé³
 In suche a point that I ne deie.
 For certés there was never keie
 Ne frozen is upon the walle
 More inly cold than I am alle.
 And thus suffre I the hoté chele
 Which passeth other peinés fele,
 In colde I brenne and fresc in hete
 And than I drinke a bitter swete
 With drié lippe and eyen wete.
 Lo, thus I temper my diete
 And take a draught of such relés⁴
 That all my wit is hertéles
 And all min herté there it sit
 Is as who saith withouté wit,
 So that to prove it by resón
 In making of comparisón
 There may no differéncé be
 Between a drunken man and me,
 But all the werst of everychone
 Is ever that I thurst in one,

The moré that my herté drinketh,
 The more I may, so that me
 thinketh,

My thurst shall never be acquieint.¹
 God shieldé that I be nought dreint
 Of such a superfluité.

For well I fele in my degre
 That all my wit is overcast,
 Wherof I am the more agast
 That in defaulte of ladyship
 Perchaunce in such a dronkeship
 I may be dead er I beware.
 For certés, fader, this I dare
 Beknowe and in my shrifté telle,
 But² I a draught have of that welle
 In which my deth is and my life,
 My joy is tornéd into strife,
 That sobre shall I never worthe,³
 But as a drunken man forworthe,⁴
 So that in londé, where I fare,

The lust is lore of my welfare,
 As he that may no boté finde.
 But this me thenketh a wonder kinde,
 As I am drunke of that I drinke
 Of thesé thoughtés that I thinke
 Of which I findé no reles,
 But if I mighté nethéles
 Of suche a drinke as I coveite
 So as me list have o receite,
 I shulde assobre⁵ and faré wele.
 But so Fortúne upon her whele
 On high medeigneth nought to sette,
 For evermore I finde a lette.
 The botéler is nought my friend
 Which hath the keié by the bend.⁶
 I may well wissh and that is waste,
 For well I wot so fressh a taste,
 But if my gracé be the more,
 I shall assaié nevermore.
 Thus am I drunke of that I se,
 For tasting is defended me,

¹ Acquieint, quenched.

² But, unless.

³ Worthe, become

⁴ Forworthe, perish

⁵ Assobre, become sober.

⁶ The key on his girdle, or band.

¹ Barme, bosom.

² Chever, shiver.

³ Asterolé, escape.

⁴ Relés, relish.

And I can nought my selven
staunche,
So that, my fader, of this braunche
I am giltif, to tellé trowth.”—

“My soné, that me thenketh
routh.

For lovédrunke is the mischefe
Above all other the moste chefe,
If he no lusty thought assay
Which may his sory thurst allay,
As for the timé yet it lesseth
To him which othér joié misseth.

“Forthy my sone, aboven all
Think well how so it the befall,
And kepe thy wittés that thou hast
And let hem nought be drunke in
wast,

But nethéles there is no wight,
That may withstondé Lovés might.
But why the cause is, as I finde,
But that there is diversé kinde
Of lovédrunké: why men pleigneth
After the court which all ordeigneth,
I will the tellen the manére,
Now list, my sone, and thou shalt
here.

For the fortune of every
chaunce

After the goddés purveaunce
To man it groweth from above,
So that the spede of every love
Is shapé there, er it befallé.
For Jupiter aboven alle,
Which is of goddes sovain,
Hath in his celler, as men sain,
Two tonnés full of lové drinke
That maketh many an herté sinke
And many an herte also to flete,¹
Or of the soure or of the swete.
That one is full of such piment,
Which passeth all entendément
Of mannés wit if he it taste,
And maketh a jolif herte in haste.

“That other bitter as the galle,

¹ *Flete*, float, swim.

Which maketh a mannés herté palle,
Whose dronkéship is a siknesse
Through feling of the bitternesse.
Cupide is botéler of bothe,
Which to the leve and to the lothe
Yiveth of the swete and of the soure,
That somé laugh and somé loure.
But for so much as he blinde is
Full ofté time he goth amis
And taketh the baddé for the good,
Which hindreth many a mannés food
Withouté cause and furthereth eke.
So be there some of lové seke
Which ought of reson to ben hole,
And somé comé to the dole
In happe and as hem selven lest¹
Drinke undeservéd of the best.

“And thus this blindé botélere
Yiveth of the trouble in stede of
chere

And eke the chere in stede of trouble.
Lo, how he can the hertés trouble
And maketh men drunke al upon
chaunce

Withouté lawe of governaunce.
If he drawe of the sweté tonne,
Than is the sorwe all overronne
Of lovédrunke, and shall nought
grevén

So to be drunken every even,
For all is thanné but a game.
But when it is nought of the same
And he the better tonné draweth,
Such dronkéship an herté gnaweth
And febleth all a mannés thought,
That better him were have drunké
nought

And all his brede have eten dric,
For than he lest his lusty wey
With dronkéship and wot nought
whider

To go, the waies ben so slider,
In whiche he may par cas so falle
That he shall breke his wittés alle.

¹ *Lest*, please.

And in this wisé men be drunke
And the drinke they have drunke.
But allé drinken nought alike,
For some shall singe and some shal
sike,

So that it me no thing mervelfleth,
My sone, of lové that the eyleth.
For wel I knowé by thy tale,
That thou hast drunken of the
dwale¹

Which bitter is, till God the sende
Such gráce that thou might
amende.

But soné, thou shalt bid and pray
In such a wisé as I shall say,
That thou the lusté well atteigne
Thy wofull thurstes to restreigne
Of Love and tasté the swetenesse,
As Bachus did in his distresse,
Whan bodeliché thurst him hent
In straungé londés, where he went.

“**This Bachus** sone of Jupiter
Was hote,² and as he wenté fer
By his fadérs assignément
To make a wer in Orient
And great powér with him he ladde,
So that the higher hond he hadde
And victoire of his enemies
And torneth homward with his
prise.

In suche a contré which was drie
A mischefe fell upon the wey,
As he rode with his compaigny
Nigh to the strondés of Lubie,
There mighté they no drinke finde
Of water ne of other kinde,
So that him self and all his hoste
Were for default of drinke almoste
Distruied, and than Bachus praid
To Jupiter, and thus he said:
‘O highé fader, that seest all,
To whom is reson that I shall
Beseche and pray in every nede,
Behold, my fader, and take hede

¹ *Dwale*, nightshade.

² *Hote*, called

This wofull thurst that we be inne,
To staunche and graunt us for to
winne

And saufe unto the contré fare
Where that our lusty lovés are
Waiténd upon our home comfng.’
And with the vois of his prayng,
Which herd was to the goddés high,
He sigh anone to-fore his eye
A wether which the grounde hath
sporned,

And where he hath it overtorned,
There sprang a wellé fressh and
clere,

Wherof his owné botélere
After the lustés of his will
Was every man, to drinke his fill.
And for this ilké greté grace
Bachus upon the samé place
A riché temple let arere,
Which ever shuldé stondé there
To thursty men in remembraunce.

“Forthý, my sone, after this
chaunce

It sit the well to taken hede
So for to pray upon thy nede,
As Bachus praidé for the well.
And thenke as thou hast herd metell
How grace he gradde¹ and grace
he had,

He was no fool that first so rad.
For selden get a domb man londe.
Take that proverbe, and under-
stonde

That wordés ben of vertue gret.
Forthý to speké thou ne let
And axe and pray érelý and late
Thy thurst to quenche, and thenke
algate,

The boteler which bereth the key
Is blinde, as thou hast herd me say.
And if it mighté so betide,
That he upon the blindé side
Par cas the sweté tonne araught,

¹ *Gradde*, cried for.

Thanshalt thou have a lusty draught
 And waxe of lovédrunké sobre.
 And thus I redé thou assobre
 Thin herte in hope of suche a grace,
 For dronkéschip in every place
 To whether sidé that it torne
 Doth harpe and maketh a man to
 sporne

And ofté falle in suche a wise,
 Where he par cas may nought arise.

“And for to loke in evidence
 Upon the sothe experiéce
 So as it hath befall er this,
 In every mannés mouth it is
 How Tristram was of lové drunke
 With Bele Isoldé, whan they drunke
 The drink which Brangweine hem
 betok

Er that king Mark his eme her toke
 To wife, as it was after knowe.
 Andeke, mysone, if thou wolt knowe
 As it hath fallen over more
 In lovés cause, and what is more
 Of dronkéschippé for to drede
 As it whilom befell in dede,
 Wherof thou might the better
 escheue

Of drunké men that thou ne sue
 The compaigny in no manere,
 A great ensample thou shalt here.

This finde I write in poesy
 Of thilké faire Ypotasy,
 Of whose beauté there as she was
 Spake everyman. And fell par cas,
 That Pirothous so him spedde,
 That he to wife her shuldé wedde,
 Wherof that he great joié made.
 And for he wolde his lové glade
 Ayein the day of mariáge
 By mouthé bothe and by messáge
 His frendés to the fest he praid,
 With great worship and as men said
 He hath this yongé lady spoused.
 And whan that they were allé housed

And set and servéd atté mete,
 There was no wine, which may
 begete

That there ne was plenty inough.
 But Bachus thilké tonné drough,
 Wherof by way of dronkéschip
 The greatest of the felaship
 Were out of reson overtake,
 And Venus, which hath also take
 The causé most in speciall,
 Hath yive him drinké forth with all
 Of thilké cuppé whiche exciteth
 The lust wherin a man deliteth.
 And thus by double weie drunke
 Of lust that ilké firy sunke¹
 Hath made hem as who saith half
 wode,²

That they no reson understode
 Ne to none other thing they seen
 But hiré which to-fore her eyen
 Was wedded thilké samé day;
 That fresshé wife, that lusty may
 Of her it was all that they thoughten
 And so ferforth her lustés soughten
 That they the whiché naméd were
 Centauri, at the festé there
 Of one assent, of one accorde,
 This yongé wife malgré her lorde
 In suche a rage away forth ladden,
 As they which none insight ne
 hadden

But only to her drunké fare,
 Which many a man hath made
 misfare

In love als wel as other wey.
 Wherof, if I shall moré say
 Upon the nature of this Vice,
 Of custume and of exercise
 The mannés grace how it fordoth,
 A talé, which was whilom soth
 Of foolés that so drunken were,
 I shall reherce unto thin ere.

I rede in a croniqué thus
 Of Galba and of Vitelliús,

¹ *Sporne*, strike with the foot; stumble.

¹ *Fynke*, touchwood, spunk ² *Wode*, mad.

The which of Spaine bothé were
The greatest of all other there,
And bothe of o condition
After the disposition
Of glotony and dronkeship,
That was a sory felaship.
Forthisthou might wel understonde,
That man may nought well longé
sonde

Which is wine drunke of comun use,
For he hath loré the vertues
Wherof that Reson shuldhim clothe,
And that was sen upon hem bothe.
Men sain there is non evidence
Wherof to knowe a difference
Betwene the drunken and the wode,
For they ben never nouthér gode ;
For where that wine doth wit away
Wisdomé hath lost the righté wey,
That he no maner Vicé dredeth ;
No moré than a blind man thredeth
His nedel by the sonnés light,
No more is Reson than of might
Whan he with dronkeship is blent.
And in this point they weren shent
This Galba both and eke Vitelle
Upon the cause as I shall telle,
Wherof good is to taken hede.
For they two through her dronken-
hede

Of witlés excitatiön
Oppressed all the naciön
Of Spaine, for all foul usaünce,
Which done was of continuaünce
Of hem which all day drunké were.
There was no wife ne maiden there
What so they were or faire or foule
Whom they ne taken to defoule,
Wherof the lond was often wo.
And eke in other thingés mo
They wroughten many a sondry
wronge.

But how so that the day be longe,
The derké night cometh atté last.
God woldé nought they shulden last,

And shope the lawe in suche a wise
That they through dome to the juise
Ben dampnéd for to be forlore.
But they that hadden be tofore
Enclined to allé drunkenesse,
Her endé thanné bare witnésse ;
For they in hopé to assuage
The peine of dethe upon the rage
That they the lassé shulden fele,
Of winé let fill full a mele
And drunken till so was befall
That they her strengthés losten all
Withouten wit of any braine,
And thus they ben half dedé slaine,
That hem ne greveth but a lite.

“ My sone, if thou be for to wite
In any point which I have said,
Wherof thy wittes bene unteid,
I redé clepe hem home ayen.”—

“ I shall do, fader, as ye sain,
Als ferforth as I may suffice.
But well I wot that in no wise
The dronkeship of Love away
I may remué by no wey,
It stant nought upon my fortúne.
But if you listé to comúne
Of the secóndé glotony,
Which clepéd is Delfcacý,
Wherof ye speken here tofore,
Beseche I woldé you therfore.”—

My sone, as of that ilké Vice
Which of all other is the norice,
And stant upon the retenue •
Of Venus, so as it is due,
The propreté how that it fareth
The boke herafter now declareth.

Of this chapitre, in which we
trete,

There is yet one of such diete
To which no pouer may atteigne,
For all is past as paindemaine¹
And sondry wine and sondry drinke
Wherof that he woll ete and drinke

¹ *Past as paindemaine*, diet unattainable by the poor ; all pastry, as fine white bread, &c.

His cokés ben for him affaited,
 So that his body is awaited
 That him shall lacké no delite
 Als ferforth as his appetite
 Suffiseth to the metés hote.
 Wherof the lusty Vice is hote
 Of gulé the Delicacy,¹
 Which all the holé progeny
 Of lusty folke hath undertake
 To fedé while that he may take
 Richessé, wherof to be founde.
 Of abstinence he wot no bounde,
 To what profit it shuldé serve.
 And yet phisique of his conserve
 Maketh many a restauración
 Unto his recreación,
 Which woldé be to Venus lefe.
 Thus for the point of his relefe
 The coke which shal his mete array
 But he the bet his mouth assay
 His lordés thank shall ofté lese
 Er he be servéd to the chese.
 For there may lacké nought so lite²
 That he ne fint anone a wite,³
 For but his lust be fully served
 There hath no wight his thank de-
 served,
 And yet for mannés sustenance
 To kepe and holde in gouernaunce
 To him that woll his helé gete
 Is none so good as comun mete.
 For who that loketh on the bokes,
 It saith, confection of cokes
 A man him shuldé well avise
 How he it toke and in what wise.
 For who that useth that he knoweth
 Full seldensiknesse on him groweth,
 And who that useth metés straunge
 Though his natúre empeire and
 chaunge
 It is no wonder, levé sone,
 Whan that he doth ayein his wone⁴
 To také metes and drinkés newe,

The which it shulde alwey eschewe
 For in phisiqué this I finde,
 That Usance is the seconde Kinde.¹

“And right so chaungeth his
 estate

He that of Love is delicate,
 For though he haddé to his honde
 The besté wife of all the londe
 Or the fairésté love of alle,
 Yet wolde his herte on other falle
 And thinke hem more delicious
 Than he hath in his owné hous.
 Men sain it is now ofté so,
 Advise hem well, that they so do,
 And for to speke in other way
 Full ofté time I have herd say,
 That he which hath no love achieved
 Him thenketh that he is nought
 relieved

Though that his lady make him
 chere,

So as she may in good manere
 Her honour and her namé save,
 But he the surplus mighté have;
 Nothing withstanding her estate,
 Of lové moré delicate,
 He set her chere at no delite
 But he have all his appetite.

“My sone, if it with the be so,
 Tell me?”—“Min holy fader, no.
 For delicate in such a wise
 Of Love, as ye to me devise,
 Ne was I never yet giltife.
 For if I haddé suche a wife,
 As ye speke of, what shulde I more?
 For than I woldé never more
 For lust of any womanhede
 Min herte upon none other fede.
 And if I did, it were a waste.
 But all withouté such repaste
 Of lust as ye me tolde above,
 Of wife or yet of other love,
 I faste and may no fodé gete,
 So that for lack of deintie mete

¹ Delicacy of the gullet.

² Lite, little.

³ Wite, blame.

⁴ Wone, custom.

¹ Use is second Nature.

Of whiche an herté may be fedde;
 I go fasténdé to my bedde.
 But might I getten as ye tolde
 So mochel that my lady wolde
 Me fedé with her glad semblaunt.
 Though me lacke all theremenaunt,
 Yet shulde I somdele ben abeshed¹
 And for the timé wel refreshed.
 But certes, fader, she ne doth ;
 For in good feith to tellé soth
 I trowé, though I shuldé sterve,
 She woldé nought her eyé swerve
 My herté with one goodly loke
 To fede, and thus for such a coke
 I may go fasting evermo.
 But if so is that any wo
 May fede a marnés herté wele,
 Therof I have at every mele
 Of plenté moré than inough.
 But that is of him self so tough,
 My stomack may it nought defic.²
 Lo, such is the Delicacie
 Of Lové which min herté fedeth,
 Thus have I lacke of that me nedeth.
 But for all this yet nethéles,
 I say, I am nought giltéles,
 That I somdele am delicate.
 For ellés were I fully mate
 But if that I some lusty stounde
 Of comfort and of esé founde
 To take of lové some repast ;
 For though I with the fullé taste
 The lust³ of Lové may nought fele,
 Min hunger otherwise I kele
 Of smalé lustés whiche I pike,
 And for a timé yet they like,
 If that ye wisten, what I mene.”—

“Now, godé soné, shrivethe clene
 Of suché deinties as ben good
 Wherof thou takest thin herté
 food.”—

“My fader, I you shall reherce,

¹ *Abeshed*, astonished.

² *Defic*, digest.

³ *Lust*, pleasure, in no bad sense ; so lusty = the German “*lustig*.”

How that my fodés ben diverse,
 So as they fallen in degre.
 One feding is of that I se,
 An other is of that I here,
 The thriddle, as I shall tellen here,
 It groweth of min owné thought.
 And ellés shulde I livé nought,
 For whom that faileth food of herte
 He may nought well the dethe as-
 terte.

“Of sight is all my firsté food,
 Through which min eye of allé good
 Hath that to him is accordaunt
 A lusty fodé suffisaunt.
 Whan that I go toward the place
 Where I shall se my ladies face,
 Min eyé, whiche is loth to faste,
 Beginneth to hunger anone so faste
 That him thinketh of an houré thre,
 Till I there come and he her se.
 And than after his appetite
 He taketh a food of such delite,
 That him noncother deintie nedeth,
 Of sondry sightés he him fedeth.
 He seeth her face of such colour
 That fressher is than any flour ;
 He seeth her front is large and pleine
 Withouté frounce of any greine ;
 He seeth her eyen liche an heven ;
 He seeth her nasé straughte and
 even ;

He seeth her ruddy upon the cheke ;
 He seeth her reddé lippés eke ;
 Her chinne accordeth to the face,
 All that he seeth is full of grace ;
 He seeth her necké rounde and clene,
 Therinné may no bone be sene ;
 He seeth her handés faire and white,
 For all this thingé without wite
 He may se naked atté leste,
 So is it well the moré feste
 And well the more delicacie
 Unto the feding of min eye.
 He seeth her shapé forth with all,
 Her body rounde, her middel small,

So well begone with good array,
Which passeth all the lust of May
Whan he is most with soft shoures
Full clothéd in his lusty floures.
With suché sightés by and by
Min eye is fed, but finally,
Whan he the port and the manere
Seeth of her womanisshé chere,
Than hath he such delite on honde
Him thenketh hemight stillé stonde
And that he hath full suffisaunce
Of livelode and of sustenaunce
As to his part for evermo,
And if it thought all oíher so,
Fro thenné wolde he never weíde
But there unto the worldés ende
He wolde abide, if that he might,
And feden him upon the sight.
For though I mighté stonden ay
Into the time of domésday
And loke upon her ever in one,
Yet whan I shuldé fro her gone
Min eyé wolde, as though he faste,
Ben hunger storven also faste
Till eft ayein that he her see,
Such is the nature of min eye.
There is no lust so deintéfull,
Of which a man shall nought be full
Of that the stomack underfongeth,
But ever in one min eyé longeth;
For loke, how that a goshawk tireth,¹
Right sodoth he, whan that he píreth
And soteth on her womanhede,
For he may never fully fede
His lust, but ever a liche sore
Him hungreth, so that he the more
Desireth to be fed algate.
And thus min eye is made the gate
Through which the deinties of my
thought
Of lust ben to min herté brought.
Right as min eyé with his loke
Is to min herte a lusty coke

¹ *Tireth*, tears and plucks in feeding, as a bird of prey.

Of Lovés fodé delicate.

Right so min ere in his estate,
Whereas min eyé may nought
serve,

Can well min hertés thank deserve
And feden him fro day to day
With suché deintés, as he may.

For thus it is, that over all
Where as I come in speciáll

I may here of my lady prise :

I here one say, that she is wise ;
An other saith, that she is good ;
And some men sain, of worthy blood
That she is come, and is also
So fair, that no where is none so ;
And some men praise her goodly
chere :

Thus every thing that I may here
Which souneth to my lady good,
Is to min ere a lusty food,
And eke min ere hath over this
A deinty festé, whan so is
That I may here her selven speke,
For than anone my faste I bieke
On suché wordés as she saith,
That full of trouth and full of feith
They ben, and of so good disporte,
That to min eré great comfórté
They done as they that ben delfees.
For all the metés and the spices
That any Lumbard couthé make
Ne be so lusty for to take
Ne so ferforth restauratife
I say as for min owné life,
As be the wordés of her mouth,
For as the windés of the south
Ben most of allé debonaire,
So whan her list to speké faire
The vertue of her goodly speche
Is verrily min hertés leche.¹

And if it so befall amonge
That she carole upon a songe,
Whan I it here I am so fed
That I am fro my self so led

¹ *Leche*, physician.

As though I were in Paradis,
 For certes as to min avis,
 Whan I here of her vois the steven¹
 Me thenkth it is a blisse of heven.
 And eke in otherwise also
 Ful ofté time it falleth so
 Min eré with a good pitaunce
 Is fed of reding of romaunce
 Of Ydoine and of Amadas,
 That whilom weren in my cas,
 And eke of other many a score,
 That loveden longe er I was bore;
 For whan I of her lovés rede,
 Min eré with the tale I fede
 And with the lust of her histoire.
 Somtime I drawe into memoire
 How sorwe may nought ever last,
 And so cometh hope in atté last,
 Whan I none other fodé knowe.
 And that endureth but a throwe,
 Right as it were a chery feste.
 But for to compten atté lest,
 As for the whilé yet it eseth
 And somdele of min hert appeseth.
 For what thing to min eré spredeth,
 Which is plesaunt, somdele it fedeth,
 With wordés such as he may gete,
 My lust in stede of other mete.

"Lo thus, my fader, as I you say
 Of lust the which min eye hath see
 And eke of that min ere hath herde,
 Full ofte I have the better ferde.
 And tho two bringen in the thriddle,
 The which hath in min herte amidde
 His placé také to array
 The lusty fodé whiche assay
 I mote, and namélich on nightes,
 Whan that me lacketh allé sightes,
 And that min hering is away,
 Than is he redy in the wey
 My reré souper² for to make,
 Of which min hertés fode I take.

"Thiis lusty cokés name is hote

¹ *Steven*, voice, sound.

² *Réré souper*, a supper after supper for the luxurious who sat up late.

Thou^{ht}, which hath ever his
 Of lovés hote
 With far boillend on the fire
 Of which^{asy} and with desire,
 Min herté^r this full ofte he fed
 And than h^{er} whan I was a bed.
 Both every sig^{ht} upon my borde
 Of lust which I h^{ave} herd or seen.
 But yet is nought n^{ow}, fest all plein,
 But all of woldés and of wisshes
 Therof have I my fullé w^{isshes},
 But as of feling and of tas^{te}
 Yet might I never have o^{re} paste.
 And thus as I have said a-fo^{rn},
 I lické hony on the thorn,
 And as who saith upon the bri^{del}
 I chewé, so that all is idel,
 As in effect the fode I have.
 But as a man that wolde him save
 Whan he is sike by medicine,
 Right so of lové the famine
 I fonde in all that ever I may
 To fede, and drivé forth the day
 Till I may have the greté fest
 Which all min hunger might arrest.

"Lo, suché ben my lustes thre,
 Of that I thenké. here and se,
 I take of lové my feding
 Withouté tasting or feling,
 And as the plover doth of aire
 I live, and am in good espeire
 That for no such delicacy
 I trowe I do no glotený.
 And nethéles to your avis,
 Min holy fader, that ben wis,
 I recommaundé min estate
 Of that I have ben delicate."—

"My sone, I understandé welc
 That thou hast told here every dele,
 And as me thenketh by thy tale
 It ben delités wonder smale
 Wherof thou takest thy lovés fode.
 But, sone, if that thou understode,
 What is to ben delicioso,

Thou woldest nought ben curioús
 Upon the lust of thin estate
 To ben to soré delicate
 Wherof that thou resón excede ;
 For in the bokés thou might rede,
 If mannés wisdom shall be sued
 It oughté wel to ben escheued
 In Loye als well as other way ;
 For as these haly bokés say,
 The bodély delices alle
 In every point how so they falle
 Unto the soulé done grevaúnce.
 And for to take in remembraúnce
 A tale accordaunt unto this,
 Which of great understanding is
 To mannés soulé resonáble,
 I thenke tell and is no fable.

“**Of Crisítés word** who wol it
 rede

Now that this Vice is for to drede
 In thevangile it telleth pleine,
 Which mote alगतé be certeine
 For Crist himself it bereth witnése.
 And though the clerke and the
 clergesse

In Latin tunge it rede and singe
 Yet for the more knouelechinge
 Of trouthe, which is good to wite,
 I shal declare as it is write
 In English, for thus it began.

“**Crist saith**: There was a
 riché man,

A mighty lord of great estate,
 And he was eke so delicate
 Of his clothíng that every day
 Of purple and bisse¹ he made
 him gay

And ete and drank therto his fill
 After the lustés of his will
 As he which all stode in delice
 And toke none hede of thilké Vice.
 And as it shuldé so betide,
 A pouer lazér upon a tide
 Came to the gate and axéd mete.

¹ *Bisse*, finest linen.

But theré might he nothing gete
 His dedely hunger for to staunche,
 For he which had his fullé paunche
 Of allé lustés atté borde
 Nedeigneth nought tospekea worde
 Onlich a crummé for to yive
 Wherof the pouer mighté live
 Upon the yift of his almesse.
 Thus lay this pouer in great distresse
 A colde and hungry at the gate,
 Fro which he mighté go no gate
 So was he wofully besene.
 And as these haly bokés sain,
 The houndés comen fro the halle,
 Where that this siké man was falle,
 And as he lay there for to deie,
 The woundés of his malady
 They licken, for to done him esc.
 But he was full of such dise
 That he may nought the deth escape.
 But as it was that timé shape
 The soulé fro the body passeth,
 And he whom nothing overpasseth,
 The highé God up to the heven
 Him toke, where he hath set him
 even

In Abrahamés barme¹ on high,
 Where he the hevens joíe sigh
 And had all that he havé wolde.
 And fell as it befallé sholde,
 This riché man the samé throwe
 With sodein deth was overthrowe
 And forth withouten any went²
 Unto the helle straught he went,
 The fende into the fire him drough
 Where that he haddé peine inough
 Of flamé which that ever brenneth.
 And as his eye abouté renneth,
 Toward the heven he cast his loke.
 Where that he sigh and hedé toke
 How Lazar set was in his see
 Als fer as ever he mighté see
 With Abraham, and than he praide
 Unto the patriarch and saide :

¹ *Barme*, bosom.

² *Went*, turning.

'Send Lazar down fro thilké sete
And do that he his finger wete
In water, so that he may droppe
Upon my tungé for to stoppe
The greté hete in which I brenne.'
But Abrahám answérdé thenne
And saidé to him in this wise:

'My soné, thou the might avise
And take into thy remembraunce
How Lazar haddé great penaunce
While he was in that other life.
But thou in all thy lust jolife
The bodely delícés soughtest,
Forthýso asthou thanné wroughtest,
Now shalt thou také thy rewarde
Of dedely peine here afterwarde
In hellé, which shall ever last.
And this Lazar now atté last
This worldés peine is overronne,
In heven and hath his life begonne
Of joié which is endéles.
But that thou praïest nethéles,
That I shall Lazar to the sende
With water on his finger ende
Thine hoté tungé for to kele,
Thou shalt no suché graces fele,
For to that foulé place of sinne
For ever in which thou shalt ben
inne,

Cometh none out of this placé thider
Ne none of you may comen hider,
Thus be ye parted now a-two.'
The rich ayeinward cridé tho:
'O Abraham, sithe it so is,
That Lazar may nought do me this
Whiche I have axéd in this place,
I woldé pray an other grace.
For I have yet of bretherne five
That with my fader ben a-live
To-gider dwellend in one hous,
To whom, as thou art graciós,
I praïé, that thou woldest sende
Lazar, so that he mighté wende
To warne hem how the worlde is
went,

That afterward they benought shent
Of suché peinés as they deie.
Lo, this I praie and this I crie.
How I may nought myself amende.'
The patriarche anone suende
To this praïér answérdé: 'Nay,'
And saide him, how that every day
His bretheren mighten knowe and
here

Of Moises on erthé here
And of prophétés other mo,
What hem was best. And he
saith: 'No,
But if there might a man arise
From deth to life in suche a wise
To tellen hem how that it were,'
He saidé, 'than of puré fere
They shulden well beware therby.'
Quod Abraham: 'Nay sikerly,
For if they now will nought obey'
To such as techen hem the wey
And all day preche and all day telle
How that it stant of heven and helle,
They woll nought thanné taken hede
Though it befellé so in dede
That any dede man were arered,
To ben of him no better lered
Than of an other man alive.'

"If thou, my soné, canst describe
This tale, as Crist him self it tolde,
Thou shalt have causé to beholde
To se so great an evidence,
Wherof the sothe experience
Hath shewéd openlich at eye,
That bodély delcacy
Of him which yiveth none almesse,
Shall after falle in great distresse.
And that was sene upon the riche,
For he ne wolde unto his liche
A crummé yiven of his brede,
Than afterward whan he was dede
A droppe of water him was werned.¹
Thus may a mannés wit be lerned
Of hem that so delités taken

¹ W'erned, denied.

Whan they with deth ben overtaken,
That erst was swete is thanné soure.
But he that is a governour
Of worldés good, if he be wise,
Within his herte he set no prise
Of all the worlde, and yet he useth
The good that he nothing refuseth,
As he which lord is of the thinges,
The ouches and the riché ringes,
The cloth of gold and the perrie
He taketh, and yet delicacie
He levethe though he wear all this.
The beste meté that there is
He eteth, and drinketh the beste
drinke,

But how that ever he ete or drinke
Delicacie he put away
As he which goth the righté wey
Nought only for to fede and clothe
His body, but his soulé bothe.
But they that taken other wise
Her lustés, ben none of the wise.
And that whilom was shewéd eke,
If thou these oldé bokés seke.

“That man that wolde him well
advise,

Delicacy is to despise
Whan Kinde accordeth nought
withall,

Wherof ensample in speciall
Of Nero whilom may be tolde,
Whiche ayein kindé manifolde
His lustés toke, till atté last,
That God him wolde all overcast,
Of whom the cronique is so plein,
Me lust no more of him to sain.
And nethéles for glotony
Of bodély delicacy

To knowe his stomack how it ferde,
Of that no man to-foré herde
Which he within him self bethought,
A wonder subtil thing he wrought.
Thre men upon election
Of age and of complexion
Lich to him self by allé way

He toke towardés him to play,
And ete and dranke as well as he,
Therof was no diversité.
For every day whan that they ete
To-foré his owné bord they sete,
And of such mete as he was served,
All though they had it nought de-
served,

They token service of the same.
But afterward all thilké game
Was into wofull earnest torned.
For whan they weré thus sojórned,
Within a time at after-mete
Nero, which haddé nought foryete
The lustés of his frele estate,
As he which all was delicate
To knowé thilke expérience,
The men let come in his presence.
And to that one the samé tide
A courser that he sholdé ride
Into the felde anone he bad,
Wherof this man was wonder glad
And goth to pricke and prauunce
about.

That other, while that he was out,
He laide upon his bed to slepe.
The thriddé, which he woldé kepe
Within his chambre faire and softe,
He goth now up now down ful ofte,
Walkénd apace, that he ne slepte
Till he which on the courser lepte,
Was comen fro the felde ayein.
Nero than, as the bokés sain,
These men did done take allé thre
And slough hem for he woldé se
The whose stomáck was best
defied.¹

And whan he hath the sothé tried,
He found that he which goth the pas
Defied best of allé was,
Which afterward he uséd ay.
And thus what thing unto his pay
Was most plesánt, he lefte none;
With every lust he was begone

¹ Was defied, had digested.

Wherof the body mighté glade,
For he no abstinencé made ;
But althermost of erthly thinges
Of women unto the likínges
Nero set all his holé herte,
For that lust shuld him nought
asteré.

Whan that the thirst of love him
caught

Where that him list he toke a
draught,

He spareth nouthér wife né maide,
That such another, as men saide,
In all this world was never yit.
He was so drunke in all his wit
Through sondry lustés which he
toke,

That ever while there is a boke
Of Nero men shall rede and sing
Unto the worldés knouleching.

“ My gode sone, as thou hast
herde,

For ever yet it hath so ferde,
Delicacy in Lovés cas
Withouté reson is and was.
For where that love his herté set
Him thenketh it might be no bet,
All though it be nought fully mete
The luste of love is ever swete.
Lo, thus to-gider of felaship,
Delicacy and dronkéschip,
Wherof Reson stant out of herre,¹
Havemade full many a wiseman erre
In Lovés causé most of all.
For than how so that ever it fall
Wit can no reson understonde,
But let the governauncé stonde
To Will, which thanné wexeth so
wilde

That he can nought himselven shilde
Fro the perill, but out of fere
The way he secheth here and there,
Him reccheth nought upon what
side,

¹ Out of herre, off its hinges.

For ofté time he goth beside
And doth such thing withouté drede,
Wherof him oughté wel to drede.
But whan that Love assoteth sore,
It passeth allé mennés lore,
What lust it is that he ordeigneth
There is no mannés might re-
streigneth,

And of God taketh he none hede,
But lawéles withouté drede,
His purpos for he wolde acheve,
Ayein the points of the beleve
He tempteth heven, erth and helle,
Here afterward as I shall telle.

“ Who dare do thing, which Love
né dare ?

To Love is every lawe unware,
But to the lawés of his hest
The fissh, the fowl, the man, the beste
Of all the worldés kindé louteth.
For Love is he which nothing
doubteth,¹

In mannés herté where he sit
He compteth nought toward his wit
The wo no moré than the wele,
No more the heté than the chele,
No more the weté than the drie,
No more to livé than to deie,
So that to-foré né behinde
He seeth no thing but as the blinde.
Withouté insight of his coráge
He doth mervéilés in his rage
To what thing that he wol him
drawe.

There is no God,¹ there is no lawe
Of whom that he taketh any hede,
But as Bayárd the blindé stede
Till he falle in the dicche a midde
He goth there no man will him bidde,
He stant so ferforth out of reule,
There is no wit that may him reule.
And thus to tell of him in soth,
Full many a wonder thing he doth,
That weré better to be laft,

¹ Doubteth, feareth.

Among the whiche is wicché craft,
That some men clepen sorcery,
Which for to winne his druery¹
With many a circumstance he
useth,

There is no point which he refuseth.
Thecraft, which that Saturnus fonde,
To maké prickés in the sonde,
That geomauncé clepéd is,
Ful oft he useth it amis ;
And of the flood his ydromaunce ;
And of the fire the piromaunce :
With questiöns echone of tho
He tempteth ofte, and eke also
Aëromaunce in jugément
To Love he bringeth of his assent.
For thesé craftés as I finde
A man may do by way of kinde
Be so it be to good entent.

• But he goéth all other went,²

- For rather er he shuldé faile
With nigromaunce he wolde assaile
To make his incantación
With hote subfumigación,
Thilke art which specular³ is hote
And used is of comun rote
Among paiéns which that craft eke.⁴
Of whiche is auctor Thosz the Greke,
He wercheth one and one by rowe.
Razel is nought to him unknowe,
The Salomónés Candary,
His Ydeác, his Eutony,
The figure and the boke withall
Of Balamuz and of Ghenball,
The seale and therupon thymáge
Of Thebith for his avauntáge
Hetaketh, and some what of Gibere,
Which helplich is to this matere.
Babylla to her sonés seven
Which hath renouncéd to the heven,

With Cernés bothé square and
rounde,

He traceth ofte upon the grounde,
Makénd his invocación.

And for full énformación

The scolé, which Honorius
Wrote, he pursueth. And lo, thus
Magique he useth for to winne
His love, and spareth for no sinne.

And over that of his sotý
Right as he secheth sorcery
Of hem that ben magiciéns,
Right so of the naturiéns

Upon the sterrés from above
His wey he secheth unto love
Als fer as he hem understondeth.

In many a sondry wise he fondeth,
He maketh ymáge, he maketh
sculptúre,

He maketh writíng, he maketh
figúre,

He maketh his calculatiöns,
He maketh his demonstratiöns,
His hours of astronomý

He kepeth as for that party
Which longeth to the inspectiön
Of love and his affectiön,

He wolde into the hellé seche
The devel him selvé to beseche
If that he wisté for to spede

To gete of love his lusty mede.
Where that he hath his herté set
He biddé never fará bet,
Ne wit of other heven more.

My sone, if thou of such a lore
Hast ben er this, I rede the leve."—

"Min holy fader, by your leve
Of all that ye have spoken here
Which toucheth unto this matere,
To tellé soth right as I wene,
I wot nought o word what ye mene.
I woll nought say if that I couth
That I nolde in my lusty youth
Beneth in helle and eke above
To winné with my ladies love

¹ *Druery*, love.

² *Went*, turning, cross way.

³ *Specular*, miswritten "spatula" in MS.
The chapter "De Speculatoria" follows that
on Geomancy in Cornelius Agrippa, "De Vanitate Scientiarum."

⁴ *Eke*, increase, extend.

Done al that ever that I might.
For therof have I none insight
Where afterward that I become
So that I wonne and overcome
Her lové which I most coveite."—

"My soné, that goth wonder
streite.

For this I may well tellé soth,
There is no man the which so doth
For all the craft that he can caste,
That he ne bieth it atté laste.
For often he that will beguile
Is guilé with the samé guile,
And thus the guiler is beguiled,
As I finde in a boke compiled
To this matére an olde histoirc,
The which comth now to my
memoire

And is of great ensEMPLARY
Ayein the vice of sorcery,
Wherof none endé may be good.
But how whilóm therof it stood,
A talé which is good to knowe
To the, my sone, I shall beknowe.

Among hem, which at Troié
were,

Ulixes at the siegé there
Was one by name in speciáll
Of whom yet the memoriáll
Abit, for while there is a mouthe
For ever his namé shall be couthe.
He was a worthy knight and king
And clerk knowénd of every thing,
He was a great rethorien,
He was a great magicien ;
Of Tullius the rethorique,
Of king Zorastes the magique,
Of Tholomé thastronomy,
Of Plato the philosophy,
Of Daniel the slepy dremes,
Of Neptune eke the water stremes,
Of Salomon and the proverbes,
Of Macer all the strength of herbes,
And the phisque of Ypocras,
And lich unto Pithagoras

Of surgery he knew the cures.
But some what of his aventúres,
Which shall to my matere accordé,
To the, my sone, I will recorde.

"This king, of which thou hast
herd sain,

From Troy as he goth home ayein
By ship, he found the see diverse
With many a windy storm reverse.
But he through wisdom which he
shapeth

Ful many a great perfl escapeth,
Of whiche I thenké tellen one,
How that malgréthenedel and stone
Wind-drive he was all sodeinly
Upon the strondés of Cilly,
Where that he must abide a while.
Twey quenés weren in that ile
Calipso naméd and Circes.
And whan they herde, how Úlixés
Is londed there upon the rive,
For him they senden also blive.¹
With him such as he wolde he nam
And to the court to hem he cam.
Thesequenés were as two goddés
Of art magique sorcerésses,
That what lord come to that rivage,
They make him love in such a rage
And upon hem assoté so,
That they woll have, er that he go,
All that he hath of worldés good.
Ulixes well this understood,
They couthé moch, he couthé more.
They shape and cast ayein him sore
And wrought many a subtil wile
But yet they might him nought
beguile ;

But of the men of his navie
They two forshope² a great partie,
May none of hem withstonde her
hestes :

Some part they shopen into bestes,
Some part they shopen into foules,

¹ *Rive, shore ; also blive, very quickly ; nam, took.*

² Those two (queens) transformed.

To berés, tigres, apés, oules,
 Or ellés by some other wey,
 Ther might no thng hem disobey,
 Such craft they had abové kinde.
 But that art couthé they nought finde
 Of which Ulixes was deceived,
 That he ne hath hem alle weived
 And brought hem into such a rote¹
 That upon him they bothe assote.
 And through the science of his arte
 He toke of hem so well his parte
 That he begat Circes with childe,
 He kepte him sobre and made hem
 wilde,

He set him selvé so above
 That with her good and with her love,
 Who that therof be leve or loth,
 All quite into his ship he goth.

Circes to-swollé bothé sides
 He left, and waiteth on the tides,
 And straught throughout the salté
 fome

He taketh his cours and comth him
 home,

Where as he found Penelopé,
 A better wife there may none be,
 And yet there ben inough of good.
 But who her goodship understood
 Fro first that she wifehodé toke,
 How many lovés she forsoke
 And how she bare her all about
 Therewhíles that her lord was out,
 He mighté make a great avaunt,
 Amonges all the remenaunt,
 That she was one of all the best.
 Well might he set his herte in rest,
 This king, whan he her founde in
 hele.

For as he couthe in wisdom dele,
 So couthé she in womanhede.
 And whan she sigh withouten drede
 Her lord upon his owné groundé,
 That he was comé sauf and soundé,

¹ *Rote*, practice; routine, as in the phrase
 "repeat by rote."

In all this world ne mighté be
 A gladder woman than was she.

"The famé which may nought
 be hid

Throughout the londe is soné kid,
 Her king is comen home ayein;
 There may no man the fullé sain
 How that they weren allé glad
 So mochel joy of him they made;
 The presents every day be newed,
 He was with yiftés all besnewed,
 The people was of him so glad
 That though none other man hem
 bad

Taillage upon hem self they sette,
 And as it were of puré dette
 They yive her goodés to the king.
 This was a glad home welcoming.

"Thushath Ulixes what he wolde,
 His wife was such as she be sholde,
 His people was to him subgite,
 Him lacketh nothing of delite.

"But Fortune is of such a fleight
 That whan a man is most on height
 She maketh him ratherst for to falle,
 Therewot no man what shall befallé.
 The happés over mannés hede
 Ben hongé with a tender threde;
 That provéd was on Ulixés,
 For whan he was móst in his pees
 Fortuné gan to make him werre
 And set his welthe al out of herre.
 Upon a day as he was mery,
 As though there might him no thing
 dery,¹

Whan night was come he goth to
 bedde,
 With slepe and both his eyen
 fedde.

And while he slept he met a sweven,
 Him thought he sigh a statue even
 Which brighter than the sonné
 shone.

A man it seméd was it none,

¹ *Dery*, hurt.

But yet it was as in figure
Most lich to mannés créature.
But as of beauté hevenlich
It was most to an aungel lich,
And thus betwene aungel and man
Beholden it this king began,
And suche a lust toke of the sight,
That fain he wolde, if that he might,
The forme of that figure embrace.
And goth him forth toward that
place

Where he sigh that ymage tho,
And takth it in his armés two
And it embraceth him ayein
And to the king thus gan it sain :

‘ Ulixes, understond wel this,
The token of our acquintaunce is
Here afterward to mochel tene ;
The lové that is us betwene,
Of that we now such joie make,
That one of us the deth shall take,
Whan timé cometh of destiné,
It may none otherwisé be.’

Ulixes tho began to pray
That this figure wolde him say
What wight he is, that saith him so.
This wight upon a speré tho
A pensel¹ which was well begone
Embrouded, sheweth him anone,
Thre fisshes all of o colour

In maner as it were a toure
Upon the pensel weré wrought.
Ulixes knew this token nought
And praith to wite, in some partie,
What thinge it mighté signifie.

‘ A signe it is,’ the wight answerde,
‘ Of an empire ;’ and forth he ferde
All sodeinly, whan he that said.

“ Ulixés out of slepe abraid,
And that was right ayein the day,
That lenger slepen he ne may.
Men sain, a man hath knoueching
Save of him self of allé thing ;

¹ *Pensel*, a small banner hanging from a lance.

His owné chauncé no man knoweth,
But as Fortúne it on him throweth,
Was never yet so wise a clerk,
Which mighté knowe all Goddés
werk,

Ne the secrét which God hath sette
Ayein a man may nought be lette.
Ulixes though that he be wise,
With all his wit in his avise
The more that he his sweven ac-
compteth

The lasse he wot what it amounteth.
For all his calculatióne
He seeth no demonstratióne
As pleynly for to knowe an ende.
But nethéles, how so it wende,
He drad him of his owné sone ;
That maketh him well the more
astone

And shope therfore anone withall
So that withinné castell wall
Thelemachum his sone he shette
And upon him strong wardehesette.
The sothé further he ne knewe,
Till that Fortúne him overthrewe.
But nethéles for sikernesse,
Where that he mighté wit and gesse
A placé strengest in his londe,
There let he make of lime and sonde
A strengthé where he wolde dwelle,
Was never man yet herdé telle
Of suche an other as it was.

And for to strength him in that cas
Of all his lond the sikerest
Of servants and the worthlest
To kepen him withinné warde
He set his body for to warde ;
And madé such an ordenaunce
For lové, ne for áqueintaunce,
That were it erely were it late
They shuldé let in at the gate
No maner man, what so betid,
But if so were him self it bid.

“ But all that might him nought
availe,

For whom Fortúné wol assaile
 There may be no such résisténce
 Which mighté make a mandefénce,
 All that shall be, mot fall algate.
 This Circes whiche I spake of late,
 On whom Ulixés hath begete
 A child, though he it have foryetc,
 Whan timé came, as it was wone,
 She was deliverd of a sone,
 Which clepéd is Thelogonus.
 This child whan he was boré thus
 About his moder to full age
 That he can reson and langage
 In good estate was drawé forth.
 And whan he was so mochel worth
 To stonden in a mannés stede,
 Circes his mother hath him bede,
 That he shall to his fader go
 And told him all to-gider tho
 What man he was that him begat.
 And whan Thelogonus of that
 Was ware, and hath full knoueleching
 How that his fader was a king,
 He praith his moder fairé this
 To go wheré that his fader is.
 And she him graunteth that hē shall,
 And made him redy forth with all.

“It was that timé such usaunce,
 That every man the conoissaunce
 Of his contré bare in his honde,
 Whan he went into straungé londe.
 And thus was every man therfore
 Wel knowé, where that he was bore,
 For espiáll and mistrowínges
 They didé thanné suché thinges
 That every man might other knowe.
 So it befell that ilké throwe
 Thelogonus, as in this cas,
 Of his contré the signé was
 Thre fisshes, which he shuldé bere
 Upon the penon of a spere.
 And whan that he was thus arraied
 And hath his harneis all assaied,
 That he was redy every dele,
 His moder bad him faré wele

And said him, that he shuldé
 swithe¹

His fader grete a thousand sithe.
 Thelogonus his moder kist
 And toke his leve, and where he wist
 His fader was, the waié name,
 Till he unto Nachaié came,
 Which of that lond the chefe citee
 Was clepéd, and there axeth he
 Where was the kinge and how he
 ferde.

And whan that he the sothé herde,
 Where that the king Ulixes was,
 Alone upon his hors great pas
 He rode him forth, and in his honde
 He bare the signal of his londe
 With fisshes thre, as I have tolde,
 And thus he went unto that holde
 Where that his owné fader dwelleth.
 The causé why he comth, he telleth
 Unto the keepers of the gate,
 And wolde have comen in there at,
 But shortly they him saidé nay.
 And he als faire as ever he may
 Besought and toldé hem of this,
 How that the king his fader is.
 But they with proudé wordés great
 Began to manace and to threte
 But² he go fro the gaté fast
 They wolde him take and setté fast.
 Fro wordés unto strokés thus
 They felle, and so Thelogonus
 Was soré hurte and well nigh dede,
 But with his sharpé sperés hede
 He maketh defence, how so it falle,
 And wan the gate upon hem alle
 And hath slain of the besté five.
 And they ascriden also blive
 Through out the castell all about ;
 On every sidé men come out,
 Wherof the kingés herte afflight,
 And he with all the hast he might
 A speré caught and forth he goth
 As he that was nigh wode for wroth.

¹ *Swithe*, strongly.

² *But*, unless.

He sigh the gatés full of blood,
 Thelogonus and where he stood
 He sigh also, but he ne knewe
 What man it was, but to him threwe
 His spere, and he sterre out a side,
 But destiné which shall betide,
 Befell that ilke timé so,
 Thelogonus knew nothing tho
 What man it was that to him caste,
 And while his owné speré laste,
 With all the signé therupon,
 He cast unto the kinge anon
 And smot him with a dedly wounde.
 Ulixes fell anone to grounde,
 Tho every man, 'The king! the
 king!'

Began to cry, and of this thing
 Thelogonus which sigh the cas
 On knes he fell and saide: 'Alas,
 I have min owné fader slain!
 Now wolde I deié wonder fain,
 Now sle me who that ever will,
 For certés it is right good skill.'¹
 He crieth, he wepeth, he saith ther-
 fore:

'Alas, that ever was I bore,
 That this unhappy destiné
 So wofully comth in by me!
 Thisking, which yet hath life inough,
 His herte ayein to him he drough
 And to that vois an ere he laide
 And understood all that he saide
 And gan to speke and saide on
 high:

'Bring me this man.' And whan
 he sigh

Thelogonus, his though he sette
 Upon the sweven which he mette,²
 And axeth, that he mighté se
 His spere, on which the fisshes thre
 He sigh upon the pensel wrought.
 Tho wist he well, it faileth nought,
 And bad him that he telle sholde

¹ Skill, reason.

² Sweven . . . mette, dream . . . dreamd.

Fro whenne he came and what he
 wolde.

Thelogonus in sorwe and wo
 So as he mighté toldé tho
 Unto Ulixes all the cas,
 How that Circés his moder was,
 And so forth said him every dele,
 How that his moder grete him wele,
 And in what wisé she him sent.
 Tho wist Ulixes what it ment,
 And toke him in his armés softe
 And all bledéndé kist him ofte
 And saidé: 'Soné, while I live,
 This infortune I the foryive.'
 After his other sone in hast
 He send, and he began him hast
 And cam unto his fader tite.
 But whan he sigh him in such plite,
 He wold have ronne upon that
 other

Anone and slain his owné brother,
 Ne haddé be that Ulixés
 Betwene hem made accorde and
 pees,

And to his heir Thelémachus
 He bad that he Thelogonus
 With all his power shuldé kepe
 Till he were of his woundés depe
 All hole, and than he shulde him
 yive

Lond where upon he mighté live.
 Thelemachus whan he this herde,
 Unto his fader he answerde
 And saide, he woldé don his wille.
 So dwellé they to-gider stille
 These brethren, and the fader
 sterveth.

"Lo, wherof sorcerié serveth.
 Through sorcerý his lust he wan,
 Through sorcerý his wo began,
 Through sorcerý his love he chese,
 Through sorcerý his life he lese.
 The child was gete in sorcerý,
 The which did all his feloný,

¹ Tite, quickly.

Thing which was ayein kindé
wrought

Unkindéliche it was abought :
The child his owné fader slough,
That was unkindéship inough.

"Forthý take hede how that it is,
So for to winné love amis,
Which endeth all his joy in wo.
For of this arte I find also,
That hath be do for Lovés sake,
Wherof thou might ensample take,
A great cronque emperiall
Which ever into memoriall
Among the men, how so it wende,
Shall dwellé to the worldés ende.

The highé creator of thinges,
Which is the king of allé kinges,
Full many wonder worldés chaunce
Let slide under his sufferáunce,
There wot no man the causé why
• But he, the which is Almightý.
And that was provéd whilom thus,
Whan that the king Nectánabús,
Which had Egípté for to lede,
But for he sigh to-fore the dede
Through magique of his sorcerie,
Wherof he couth a great partic,
His enemies to him coménd,
Fro whom he might him nought
defend,

Out of his owné lond he fledde
And in the wise as he him dredde
It fell, for all his wicchecraft,
So that Egípte him was beraft.
And he disguised fledde away
By ship and held the righté way
To Macedoiné, where that he
Arriveth at the chefe citee.
Thre yomen of his chambre there
All only for to serve him were,
The which he trusteth wonder wele
For they were trewe as any stele.
And hapneth that they with him
ladde

Parte of the besté good he hadde,

They také logginge in the town
After the dispositioun,
Where as him thoughté best to
dwele.

He axeth than and herdé telle
How that the kingé was out go
Upon a werre he haddé tho.
But in that citee thanné was
The quené which Olimpias
Was hote and with solempnité
The feste of her nativité,
As it befell, was thanné holde.
And for her lust to be beholde
And preiséd of the people about
She shope her for to riden out
At after-mete all openly.

Anonc were allé men redý,
And that was in the month of May.
This lusty quene in good array
Was set upon a mulé white,
To sene it was a great delite
The joié that the citee made.
With fresshé thingés and with glade
The noble town was all behonged,
And every wight was sore alonged
To se this lusty lady ride.
There was great merth on allé side
Where as she passeth by the strete,
There was ful many a timbre betc
And many a maidé carolénde.
And thus through out the town
pleiénde

This quene unto the pleiné rode,
Where that she hovéd and abode
To se diversé gamés pley,
The lusty folk joust and tourney.
And so forth every other man
Which pleié couth his pley began
To plesé with this noble quene.

"Nectánabús came to the grene
Amongés other and drough him
nigh.

But whan that he this lady sigh
And of her beauté hedé toke,
He couthé nought witholde his loko

To se nought ellés in the felde,
But stood and only her behelde.
Of his clothinge and of his gere
He was unliche all other there,
So that it hapneth atté laste
The quene on him her eyé caste
And knew that he was straunge
anone.

But he behelde her ever in one
Withouté blenching of his chere.
She toke good hede of his manére
And wondreth why he didé so,
And bad men shuldé for him go.
He came and did her reverence.
And she him axeth in silénce
From whenne he cam and what he
wolde.

And he with sobre wordés tolde,
He saith: 'Madame, a clerk I am
To you and in messáge I cam
The whiche I may nought tellen
here,

But if it liketh you to here,
It mot be said so privély'
Where none shall be but ye and I.

"Thus for the time he toke his
leve.

The day goth forth till it was eve
That every man mot leve his werk.
And she thought ever upon this clerk,
What thing it is that he wold mene.
And in this wise abode the quene
And passeth over thilké night,
Till it was on the morwé light.
She sendé for him, and he came,
With him his astrolabe he name,¹
Which was of finé gold precíous
With points and cercles mervoíous.
And eke the heavenly figúres
Wrought in a boke full of peintúres
He toke this lady for to shewe
And tolde of eche of hem by rewe
The cours and the condícion.
And she with great affection

¹ Name, took.

Sate still and herdé what he wolde.
And thus whan heseeth time he tolde
And feigneth with his wordés wise
A tale and saith in such a wise:

'Madamé, but a while ago,
Where I was in Egipté tho
And rad in scole of this science,
It fell into my consciénce

That I unto the temple went
And there with all min hole entent
As I my sacrificé dede

One of the goddés hath me bede
That I you warné privély,

So that ye maké you redý,
And that ye be nothing agast,

For he such love hath to you cast,
That ye shall bene his owné dere

And he shall be your beddéré
Till ye conceive and be with childe.'

And with that word she wax all milde
And somdele red became for shame'

And axeth him that goddés name,
Which so wold done her compaigny.

And he said: 'Amos of Luby.'

And she saith: 'That may I nought
leve,

But if I se a better preve.'

'Madamé,' quod Nectánabús,

'In token that it shall be thus

This night for enformatión

Ye shall have an avisió,

That Amos shall to you appere

To shewe and teche in what manere

The thing shall afterward befallé.

Ye oughten well aboven alle

To maké joy of such a lorde.

For whan ye ben of one accorde

He shall a sone of you begete

Which with his swerd shall win and
gete

The widé worlde in length and brede,

All erthly kingés shall him drede.

And in such wise I you behote

The god of erthe he shall be hote.'

'If this be soth,' tho quod the quene,

'This night, thou saiest, it shall be sene.

And if it falle into my grace,
Of god Amos that I purcháse
To take of him so great worship,
I wol do the such ladiship,
Wherof thou shalt for evermo
Be riche.' And he her thonketh
tho

And toke his leve and forth he went.
She wisté litel what he ment.
For it was guile and sorcery
All that she toke for prophecy.

Nectánabús throughout the day
Whan he cam homewhere as he lay
His chambre by him self betoke
And overtorneth many a boke
And through the craft of artemáge¹
Of wexe he forgéd an ymáge.
He loketh his equacións
And eke the constellacións,
He loketh the conjuncións,
He loketh the recepcións,
His signe, his houre, his ascendént,
And draweth Fortune of his assent.
The name of queene Olimpias
In thilke ymáge written was
Amiddés in the front above.
And thus to winne his lust of love
Nectánabús this werk hath dight.
And when it cam withinné night,
That every wight is fall aslepe,
He thought he wolde his timé kepe
As he, whiche hath his houre
apointed.

And thanné first he hath anointed
With sondry herbés that figúre
And therupon he gan conjúre,
So that through his enchantément
This lady, which was innocent
And wisté nothing of this guile,
Met² as she slepté thilke while,
How fro the heven came a light,
Whiche all her chambre madé light.

¹ *Artemage*, Art Magic. ² *Met*, dreamed.

And as she loketh to and fro,
She sigh, her thought, a dragon tho,
Whose scherdes¹ shinen as the
sonne,

And hath his softé pas begonne
With all the cheré that he may
Toward the bed there as she lay,
Till he came to the beddés side.
And she lay still and nothing cride,
For he did all his thingés faire
And was courteis and debonaire.
And as he stood her fasté by,
His forme he chaungeth sodeinly,
And the figúre of man he nome
To her and into bed he come,
And she was wonder glad withall.
Nectánabús, which causeth all
Of this metredé² the substauce,
Whan hesigh time his nigromaunce
He stint and nothing moré saide
Of his carecte, and she abraide
Out of her slepe and leveth weie
That it is soth than every dele
Of that this clerke her haddé tolde,
And was the glader many folde
In hope of suche a glad metréde
Which after shall befallé in dede.
She longeth sore after the day,
That she her sweven tellé may
To this guiloúr in priveté,
Which knewe it al so well as she.
And nethéles on morwe sone
She left al other thing to done
And for him send, and all the cas
She tolde him plainly as it was
And saidé, how than well she wist
That she his wordes mighté trist,
For she founde her avisióñ
Right after the conditióñ
Which he her haddé told to-fore,
And praid him hertély therfore,
That he her holdé covenant
So forth of all the remenant,

¹ *Scherdes*, scales.

² *Metredé*, dream-counsel.

That she may through his orde-
naunce

Towardés god do such plesaunce,
That she wakéndé might him kepe
In such wise as she met¹ a slepe.
And he that couth of guile inough,
Whan he this herd, for joy he lough
And saith: 'Madame, it shall be do.
But this I warné you therto,
This night whan that he comth to
play,

That there be no life² in the way
But I that shall at his liking
Ordeiné so for his comíng
That ye ne shall nought of him faile.
For this, madame, I you counseile,
That ye it kepé so privé,
That no wight ellés but we thre
Have knouleching how that it is;
For ellés might it fare amis
If ye didought that shulde him greve.'
And thus he makth her to beleve
And feigneth under guilé feith.
But nethéles all that he saith
She troweth. And ayein the night
She hath within her chambredight,
Where as this guiler fasté by
Upon this god shall privély
Awaite, as he makth her to wene.
And thus this noble gentil quene,
Whan she most trusted, was de-
ceived.

"The night come, and the cham-
bre is weived,

Nectánabús hath take his place,
And whan he sigh the time and space,
Through the deceit of his magíque
He put him out of mannés like
And of a dragon toke the forme,
As he, which wolde him all conforme
To that she sigh in sweven er this;
And thus to chambred come he is.
The quené lay a bed and sigh
And hopeth ever as he cam nigh,

¹ Met, dreamed,

² No life, no body.

That he god of Lublé were,
So hath she well the lessé fere.
But for he wold her more assure,
Yet efte he chaungeth his figure
And of a wether the likenesse
He toke in signe of his nobléssé,
With largé hornés for the nones
Of finé gold and riché stones.
A corone on his heved he bare
And sodeinlich, er she was ware,
As he whiche alle guilé can,
His forme he torneth into man.
All though she were in part de-
ceived,

Yet for all that she hath conceived
The worthiest of allé kithe,
Which ever was to-fore or sithe
Of conquest and chiválerie,
Só that through guile and sorcerie
There was that noble knight be-
gonne,
Which all the worlde hath after
wonne.

Thus fell the thing which fallé
sholde,

Nectánabús hath that he wolde,
With guile he hath his lové sped,
With guile he came into the bed,
With guile he goth him out ayein.
He was a shrewéd chamberlein
So to beguile a worthy quene,
And that on him was after sene.
But nethéles the thing is do.
This falsé god was soné go
With his deceit and helde him
close,

Till morwe cam that he arose,
And tho, whan time and leiser was,
The quené tolde him all the cas
As she that guilé none supposeth,
And of two points she him opposeth.
One was, if that this god no more
Woll come ayein, and overmore
How she shall stonden in accorde
With king Philippe her owné lorde,

When he comth home and seeth
her grone.

‘Madame,’ he saith, ‘let me
alone,

As for the god I undertake
That whan it liketh you to take
His compaigný at any throwe,
If I a day to-fore it knowe
He shall be with you on the night,
And he is well of such a might
To kepé you from allé blame.
Forthý comforté you, madame,
There shall none other causé be.’
Thus toke he leve and forth goth he.
And tho began he for to muse
How he the quené might excuse
Toward the king of that is falle,
And found a craft amongés alle,
Through which he hath a see foule
daunted¹

With his magique and so en-
chaunted,
That he flew forth whan it was night
Unto the kingés tenté right,
Where that he lay amidde his hoste.

“And whan he was a-slepé most,
With that the see foule to him
brought,

An other charmé which he wrought
At home within his chambre still,
The kinge he torneth at his will,
And maketh him for to dreame and se
The dragon and the priveté
Which was betwene him and the
quene.

And over that he made him wene
In sweven that the god Amós,
Whan he up fro the quene aros,
Toke forth a ring wherin a stone
Was set and gravé therupon
A sonne, in which, whan he cam nigh,

A leon with a swerd he sigh.
And with that prent, as he somette,²
Upon the quenés wombe he sette

¹ A sea-fowl tamed.

² Mette, dreamed.

A seal, and goth him forth his way;
With that the sweven went away.
And tho began the king awake
And sigheth for his wivés sake
Where as he lay within his tent,
And hath great wonderwhatitment,
With that he hasted him to rise
Anone and sent after the wise,
Among the whiché there was one,
A clerke, his name is Amphione,
Whan he the kingés sweven herde,
What it betokneth he answerde
And saith: ‘As sikerly as the life
A god hath laien by thy wife
And got a soné which shall winne
The world and all that is withinne.
As leon is the king of bestes
So shall the world obey his hestes,
Which with his swerd shal al be
wonne

Als fer as shineth any sonne’

“The king was doubtif of this
dome,

But nethéles whan that he come
Ayein into his owné lond,
His wife with childé great he fond;
He mighté nought him selven stere
That he ne made her hevý chere.
But he which couthe of allé sorwe,
Nectánabús, upon the morwe
Through the deceit of nigromaúnce
Toke of a dragon the semblaúnce
And where the king sat in his halle,
Cam in rampénd among hem alle
With such a noise and such a rore,
That they agast were all so sore
As though they shuldé deie anone.
And nethéles he greveth none,
But goth toward the deis on high.
And whan he cam the quené nigh,
He stint his noise and in his wise
To her he profreth his servíce
And laith his hede upon her barme,
And she with goodly chere her arme
About his necke ayeinward laide,

And thus the quené with him plaide
 In sight of allé men about.
 And atté last he gan to lout
 And óbeisaunce unto her make,
 As he that wolde his levé take.
 And sodeinly his lothely forme
 Into an egle he gan transforme,
 And fligh and set him on a raile,
 Wherof theking had great merveile.
 For there he pruneth him and piketh,
 As doth an hawk whan him wel
 liketh,

And after that him self he shoke,
 Wherof that all the halle quoke,
 As it a terremoté¹ were.
 They saiden alle, god was there,
 In suche a rees and forth he fligh.

"The king which all this wonder
 sigh,

Whan he cam to his chambre alone,
 Unto the quené made his mone
 And of foryivenesse he her praide.
 For than he knew well, as he saide,
 She was with childé with a god.

"Thus was the king withouté rod
 Chastiséd and the quene excused
 Of that she haddé ben accused.
 And for the greater evidence
 Yet after that in the preséncé
 Of king Philip and other mo,
 Whan they ride in the feldés tho,
 A fesaunt came before her eye
 The whiche anone, as they her sigh
 Fleéndé, let an ey² down falle,
 And it to-brake to-fore hem alle.
 And as they token therof kepe,
 They sigh out of the shellé crepe
 A litel serpent on the groundé,
 Which rampeth all abouté roundé,
 And in ayein he woll have wonne,
 But for the brenning of the sonne
 It mighté nought, and so it deide.
 And therupon the clerkés saide :

'As the serpént, when it was out,

¹ *Terremoté*, earthquake.

² *Ey*, egg.

Went environ the shelle abouté
 And mighté nought torne in ayein,
 So shall it fallen in certein,—
 This child the world shall environé
 And above allé the corone
 Him shall befall, and in yonge age
 He shall desire in his coráge,
 Whan all the worlde is in his honde
 To torne ayein unto the londe
 Where he was bore, and in his wey
 Howeward he shall with poison dey.'

"The king whiche al this sigh
 and herde

Fro that day forth how so it ferde
 His jalousie hath all foryete.
 But he, whiche hath the child begete,
 Nectánabús in privité
 The time of his nativité
 Upon the constellation
 Awaiteth and relatió
 Maketh to the quene, how she snall
 do,

And every houre appointeth so
 That no minúte therof was lore.
 So that in dué time is bore
 This childe, and forthwith therupon
 There fellen wonders many one ;
 Of terremote uníverséle ;
 The sonné toke colóur of stele
 And lost his light ; the windés blewe
 And many strengthés overthrewe ;
 The see his propré kindé chaungeth
 And all the worlde his formé
 straungeth ;

The thunder with his fry leven
 So cruel was upon the heven,
 That every erthely créature
 Tho thought his life in aventure.
 The tempest atté lasté ceseth,
 The child is kepte, his age encreseth,
 And Alisaúndre his name is hote ;
 To whom Calistre and Aristote
 To techen him philosophy
 Entenden, and astronomý
 With other thingés which he couth,

Also to teche him in his youth
 Nectánabús toke upon honde.
 But every man may understonde
 Of sorcery, how that it wende,
 It woll him selvé prove at ende,
 And namcly for to beguile
 A lady which withouté guile
 Supposeth trouthall that she hereth.
 But often he that evil stereth,
 His ship is dreint therin amidde,
 And in this cas right so betidde.
 Nectánabús, upon a night
 Whan it was faire and sterré light,
 This yongé lord lad upon high
 Above a toure, where as he sigh
 The sterrés such as he accompteth,
 And saith what eche of hem
 amounteth,

As though he knewe of allé thing.
 But yet hath he no knowleching
 What shal unto him self befallé.
 Whan he hath tolde his wordés alle,
 This yongé lord than him opposeth
 And axeth if that he supposeth
 What dethe he shul him selvé dey.
 He saith : ' Or fortune is away
 And every sterre hath lost his wone,
 Or ellés of min owné sone
 I shall be slain, I may nought fle.'
 Thought Alisaundre in priveté :
 ' Herof this oldé dotard lieth.'
 And er that other ought aspieth
 All sodeinlich his oldé bones
 He shof over the wall at ones
 And saith him : ' Lie down there a
 part !

Wherof now serveth all thin art ?
 Thou knewe all other mennés
 chaunce

And of thy self hast ignoraunce ;
 That thou hast said amonges alle
 Of thy persone is nought befallé.'

"Nectánabús, which hath his
 dethe,

Yet while him lasteth life and brethe

To Alisaundre he spake and said
 That he with wrong blame on him
 laid.

Fro point to point and all the cas
 He tolde, how he his soné was.
 Tho he which sory was inough,
 Out of the dich his fader drough
 And tolde his moder how it ferde,
 In counseil and whan she it herde,
 And knew the tokens which he tolde,
 She nisté¹ what she saie sholde,
 But stood abasshed as for the while
 Of this magíque and all the guile.
 She thought, how that she was
 deceived,

That she hath of a man conceived
 And wende a god it haddé be.
 But nethéles in such degre
 So as she might her honour save
 She shope the body was begrave.
 And thus Nectánabús abought
 The sorcerié, which he wrought,
 Though he upon the créatúres
 Through his carectés and figúres
 The maistry and the power hadde
 His Créatór to nought him ladde,
 Ayein whose lawe his craft he useth,
 Whan he for lust his god refuseth
 And toke him for the devels craft.
 Lo, what profft is him belaf :
 That thing, through which he wend
 have stonde,

First him exiléd out of londe
 Which was his own, and from a king
 Made him to be an underling,
 And sithen to deceive a quene,
 That torneth him to mochel tene,
 Through lust of love he gat him
 hate,

That endé couth he nought abate
 His oldé sleightés which he cast,
 Yonge Alisaundre him overcast ;
 His fader which him misbegat
 He slough, a great mishap was that.

Nisté, knew not.

But for o mis an other mis
Was yolde, and so full ofte it is.
Nectánabús his craft miswent,
So it misfell him er he went.¹
I not what helpeth that clerý²
Which maketh a man to do folý,
And namélich of nigromaúnce,
Which stont upon the miscreaúnce.

“And for to se more evidence
Sorastes, which the experience
Of art magiqué first forth drough,
Anone as he was bore he lough,
Which token was of wo súfinge,
For of his owné controvíngé
He found magiqué and taught it
forth,

But all that was him litel worth.
For of Surrie a worthy king
Him slewe and that was his endíng.
But yet through him this craft is
used,
And he through all the world ac-
cused,
For it shall never well achieve
That stont nought right with the
beleve.

But lich to wolle is evil sponne,
Wholeseth himself hath litel wonne,
An ende proveth every thing.

“**Satíl**, which was of Jewés king,
Up peine of deth forbad this arte,
And yet he toke therof his parte.
The Phitonisse in Samary
Yaf him counseil by sorcery,
Which after fell to mochel sorwe.
For he was slain upon the morwe.
To conné mochel thing it helpeth,
But of to moché no man yelpeth.³
So for to loke on every side,
Magiqué may nought well betide.

“Forthý my sone, I woll the rede,
That thou of these ensamples drede,
That for no lust of erthly love

Thou seché so to come above
Wherof as in the worldés wonder
Thou shalt for ever be put under.”—

“My godé fader, graunt mercý,
For ever I shall beware therby
Of Lové what me so befallé
Such sorcery aboven alle.

Fro this day forth I shall escheue,
That so ne woll I nought pursue
My lust of Lové for to seche.
But this I woldé you beseche
Besidé that me stant of Love,
As I you herdé speke above,
How Alisaundre was betaught
Of Aristotle and so well taught
Of all that to a king belongeth,
Wherof my herté soré longeth
To wité what it woldé mene.
For by resón I woldé wene,
But if I herde of thingés straunge,
Yet for a time it shuldé chaunge
My peine and lissé me somdele.”—

“My godé soné, thou saiest wele.
For wisdom, how that ever it
stonde,

To him that can it understonde
Doth great profit in sondry wise;
But touchend of so high a prise,
Which is nought unto Venus knowe,
I may it nought my selvé knowe,
Which of her Court am all forth
drawe

And can no thing but of her lawe.
But nethéles to knowé more
As wel as thou me longeth sore.
And for it helpeth to comúne
All be they nought to me comune,
The scolés of philosophy
Yet think I for to specify
In boke as it is comprehended,
Wherof thou mightest ben amended.
For though I be nought all cunningg
Upon the forme of this writting,
Some part therof yet I have herde,
In this matere how it hath ferde.

¹ Went, weened.

² Clergy, learning.

³ I'elpeth, boasts.

Book III.

HOW A KING WAS TAUGHT.

I Genius the prest of love,
My sone, as thou hast praid
 above,
That I the scolé shall declare
Of Aristotle and eke the fare
Of Alisaundre, how he was
 taught,
I am somdele therof distraught.
For it is, nowight the matere
Of lové, why we sitten here
To shrivé so as Venus badde,
But nethéles for it is gladde,
So as thou saist, for thin apprise
To here of suché thingés wise,
Wherof thou might thy timé lisse,
So as I can, I shall the wisse.
For Wisdom is at every throwe
Above all other thing to knowe
In Lovés cause and ellés where.
Forthý my sone, unto thin ere,
Thíough it be nought in the registre
Of Venus, yet of that Calistre
And Aristotle whilom write
To Alisaundre, thou shalt wite.
But for the lorés ben diverse
I thenké first to the reherce
The nature of philosophý,
Which Aristotle of his clergy
Wise and experte in the Sciénces,
Declaréd thilke intelligénces,
As of the points in principall.
Wherof the first in speciáll
Is Theoríqué, which is grounded

On him which al the worlde hath
 founded,
Which comprehended al the lore.
And for to loken overmore
Next of Sciénces the secoúnde
Is Rhetoriqué, whose facounde
Above all other is eloquent.
To telle a tale in jugémént
So well can no man speke as he.
The lasté Science of the thre
It is Practiqué, whose office
The Vertu trieth fro the Vice
And techeth upon godé thewes¹
To fle the compaigny of shrewes,²
Which stant in diposición
Of mannes fre election.
Practique enformeth eke the reule,
How that a worthy King shall reule
His realme both in werie and pees.
Lo, thus danz³ Aristotelés
These thre Sciénces hath divided
And the natúre also decided
Wherof that eche of hem shall serve.
The firsté, which is the conserve
And keper of the remenaunt,
As that which is most suffisaunt
And chefe of the philosophy,
If I therof shall specify,
So as the philosóphre tolde,
Now herke and kepe that thou it
 holde.

¹ *Thewes*, manners, morals.

² *Shrewes*, evil men.

³ *Danz*, Dominius, applied to a Graduate in Arts.

“Of theorique principall
 The philosophe in speciall
 The propertés hath déterméed,
 As thilké which is enluméed
 Of wisdom and of high prudence
 Above all other in his science,
 And stant departed upon thre.
 The first of which in his degre
 Is clepéd in philosophy
 The Science of Theology,
 That other naméd is Phisique,
 The thridde is said Mathématique.
 Theology is that science,
 Which unto man yiveth evidence
 Of thing which is nought bodely,
 Wherof men knowé redely
 The High Almighty Trinité,
 Which is o God in Unité
 Withouten ende and bégínníng
 And Creatór of allé thing,
 Of erthe, of heaven and of helle,
 Wherof as oldé bokés telle
 The philosophe in his resón
 Wrote upon this conclusión,
 And of his writing in a clause
 He clepeth God the Firsté Cause,
 Which of him self is thilké good
 Withouté whom nothing is good,
 Of which that every créature
 Hath his being and his nature.
 After the being of the thinges
 There ben thre formés of beínges.

“ Thing, which began and endé
 shall,

That thing is clepéd temporall.
 There is also by other way
 Thing which began and shall nought
 dey

As soulés that ben spirituell,
 Her being is perpetuell.
 But there is one above the sonne
 Whose timé never was begonne
 And endelés shall ever be,
 That is the God, whose magesté
 All other thingés shall góverne,

And his Being is sempitérne.
 The God, to whom that all honour
 Belongeth, he is Creatour.
 And other ben his créatures,
 He commaundeth the natures
 That they to him obeíen allé.
 Withouten him, what so befallé,
 Her might is none and He may¹ all:
 The God was ever and ever shall,
 And they begonne of his assente.
 The times allé be present
 To God, and to hem alle unknowe,
 But what him liketh that they knowe.
 Thus both an aungel and a man,
 The which of all that God began.
 Be chefe, obeíen Goddes might,
 And He stont endélés up right.
 To this Sciéncé ben privé
 The Clerké of Divinité,
 The which unto the people prechen
 The feith of Haly Chirche and techen,
 Which in one cas upon beleve
 Stant moré than they conné preve
 By wey of argument sensible.
 But nethéles it is crédible
 And doth a man great medé have
 To him that thenketh him self to
 save.

Theology in such a wise
 Of highé Science and apprise
 Above all other stant unlike
 And is the first of Theorique.

“ Phisique is after the secóndé,
 Through which the philosophe
 hath fonde

To techen sondry knoulechinges
 Upon the bodeliché thinges
 Of man, of heste,* of herbe, of stone,
 Of fisshe, of foule, of everichone
 That ben of bodély substaínce,
 The nature and of the substaunce.
 Through this Sciéncé it is full sough,
 Which vailleth and which vailleth
 nought.

¹ May, has power over.

"The thridde point of Theorique,
Which cleped is Mathématique,
Devided is in sondry wise
And stant upon divers apprise.
The first of whiche is Arismetique,¹
And the second is said Musique,
The thridde is eke Geometrie,
Also the forth Astronomic.

"Of Arsmétique the matere
Is that of which a man may lere,
Whatalgorisme² in nombreamount-
eth,

Whan that the wiseman accompteth
After the formal propreté
Of algorismes a, be, ce.
By which multiplicación
Is made and diminución
Of sommés by the experience
Of this art and of this sciéce.

"The seconde of mathématique,
Which is the Science of Musique,
That techeth upon Harmonie
A man to maké melodie
By vois and soune of instrument
Through notés of accordément,
The whiche men pronounce alofte,
Now sharpe notés and now softe
Now highé notés and now lowe,
As by the gamme³ a man may knowe,
Which techeth the prolación
Of note and the condition.

Mathematique of his Sciéce
Hath yet the thridde intelligéce
Full of wisdom and of clergie
And cleped is Geometrie,
Through which that a man hath the
sleight
Of length, of brede, of depth, of height
To knowé the proporción
By verray calculación
Of this Science. And in this wise
These oldé philosophres wise
Of all this worldés erthé rounde

¹ *Arismetique*, Arithmetic.

² *Algorisme*, Algebra.

³ *Gamme*, gamut.

How large, how thicke was the
grounde,

Contrived in the experience,
The cercle and the circumfERENCE
Of every thing unto the heaven
They setten point and mesure even.

"Mathématique above the erth,
Of High Science above, the ferth
Which speketh upon Astronomie
And techeth of the sterrés high,
Beginning upward fro the mone.
But first, as it was for to done
This Aristotle in other thing
Unto this worthy yongé king
The kinde of every element,
Which stant under the firmament,
How it is made and in what wise
Fro point to point he gan devise.

"He, which natúreth every kinde,
The mighty God, so as I finde,
Of Man, which is his créature,
Hath so devided the nature
That none till other well accordeth,
And by the cause it so discordeth
The life, which feleth the siknesse,
May stond upon no sikernesse.

"Of therthé, which is colde and
dry,

The kinde of man Maléncoly
Is cléped, and that is the firste,
The most ungoodlich and the werste.
What man hath that complexion,
Full of ymaginación
Of dredés and of wrathfull thought,
He fret him selven all to nought.

"The water, which is moist and
colde, [solde,
Maketh Fleumé,¹ which is mani-
Foryetel, slow and wery sone
Of every thing whiche is to done.

What man that taketh his kind
of thair,
He shall be light, he shall be fair.

¹ *Fleumé*, phlegm of the phlegmatic temperament.

For his complexión is blood,
Of allé there is none so good,
Where as he hath love undertake,
Wronge is it, if that he forsake.

"The first of his condición
Appreth the complexión,
Whose propretes ben drie and hote,
Which in a man is coler¹ hote.
It maketh a man ben enginous
And swifte of fote and eke irous.²
Of conteke and fool hastifnesse
He hath a right great besinesse.

After the kinde of thelement
Thus stant a mannés kindé went³
As touchend his complexión
Upon sondry división
Of dry, of moist, of chele, of hete,
And eche of hem his owné sete
Appropred hath within a man.
And first to telle as I began
The Splen is to Maléncolý
Assigned for herbergery.⁴

"The moisté Fleumé with the
colde

Hath in the Lungés for his holde
Ordeiné him a propre stede
To dwellé there as he is bede.

"To the Sanguíne Complexión
Náturé of his inspectión
A propre hous hath in the Liver
For his dwellingé made deliver.⁵

"The drie Coler with his hete
By wey of kinde his propre sete
Hath in the Gallé, where he dwel-
leth,
So as the philosóphre telleth.

"Now over this is for to wite,
As it is in phisiqué write
Of Liver, of Lunge, of Galle, of Splen,
They all unto the herté ben
Sersaúnts, and eche in his office

¹ Coler, choler, bile.

² Irous, given to anger, choleric.

³ Kindé went, natural turn or bent

⁴ The Splen is assigned to Melancholy for its place of lodging.

⁵ Deliver, free, supple.

Entendeth to don him servíce,
As he, which is chefe lord above.
The Liver maketh him for to love,
The Lungé yiveth him wey of speche,
The Gallé servéth to do wreche.
The Splendeth him to laugh and play
Whan all unclennesse is away.
Lo, thus hath eche of hem his dede
To susteignen hem and fede.

In time of recreation

Nature hath in creatión

The Stomack for a comun coke

Ordeiné so, as saith the boke :

The Stomack coke is for the hall

And boileth meté for hem all

To make hem mighty for to serve

The Herté, that he shall nought
sterve.

For as a King in his empire

Above all other is lorde and sire,

So is the Herté principall,

To whom Resón in speciáll

Is yove as for the governaunce.

"And thus natúre his purveaúnce

Hath made for man to liven here.

But God which hath the Soule dere

Hath forméd it in other wise

That can no man plainly devise.

But as the clerkés us enforme,

That lich to God it hath a forme,

Through which figure and which
likenesse

The Soule hath many an high
noblesse

Appropred to his owné kinde.

But oft her wittés ben made blinde

Al onelich of this ilké pointe,

That her abiding is conjointe

Forth with the body for to dwelle.

"That one desireth toward helle,

That other upward to the heven ;

So shall they never stonde in even

But if the Flessh be overcome

And that the Soule have holynome¹

¹ Holy nome, wholly taken.

The governaunce, and that is selde
While that the Flessh him may
bewelde.

All erthely thing which God began,
Was only made to servé man,
But he the Soul all onely made
Him selven for to serve and glade.
All other bestés that men finde
They serve unto her owné kinde,
But to Resón the Soulé serveth,
Wherof the man his thank deserveth
And get him with his workés good
The perdurable livés food.

"Of what matere it shall betolde
A talé liketh many folde
The bet if it be spoké pleine,
Thus thenke I for to torne ayeine
And tellen plenerly therfore
Of therthé, wherof now to-fore
I spake, and of the water eke,
So as these oldé bokés speke,
And setté properly the bounde
After the forme of mappemounde,¹
Through which the ground by parties

Departed is in thre parties,
That is Asie, Aufríque, Europé.
The which under the heven cope
As fer as strecceth any ground
Begripeth all this erthé round.
But after that the highe wreche²
The water weies let out seche
And overgo the hillés high,
Which every kindé madé deie
That upon middel erthé stood
Out také Noë and his blood,
His sonés and his daughters thre
They weren saufand so was he.
Her namés, who that redé right,
Sem, Cham, Japhét the brethern
hight,
And whanné thilke almighty honde

Withdrough the water fro the londe
And all the ragé was away
And erthé was the mannés way,
The sonés thre, of which I tolde,
Right after that hem selvé wolde,
This world departé they begonne.¹

"Asía, which lay to the sonne
Upon the marche of orient,
Was graunted by commune assent
To Sem, which was the sone eldést,
For that partié was the best
And double as moch as other
two.

And was that timé bounded so;
Wher as the flood which men Nile
calleth,

Departeth fro his cours and falleth
Into the see Aléxandrine,
There taketh Asie first sesíne²
Toward the west, and over this
Of Canahim, where the flood is
Into the Greté See rennénd,
Fro that into the worldés end
Estwarde Asie it is algates
Till that men comen to the gates
Of Paradis, and theré ho.³
And shortly for to speke it so
Of orient in generall
Within his bounde Asié hath all.

"And than upon that other side
Westwárde, as it fell thilké tide,
The brother, which was hoté
Cham,
Unto his parte Aufríqué nam.
Japhét Europé tho toke he;
Thus parten they the worlde on thre.
But yet there ben of londés fele⁴
In occident as for the chele,
In oriente as for the hete,
Which of the people be forlete
As lond desérte, that is unáble,
For it may nought ben habitáble.

¹ *Mappemounde*, Mappa Mundi, map of the world.

² *The highe wreche*, the vengeance of God.

¹ They began to divide this world.

² *Sesíne*, seizin, possession.

³ *Ho*, stop.

⁴ *Fele*, many.

"The water eke hath sondry
bunde,

After the lond where it is founde,
And taketh hisname of thilké londes
Where that it renneþh on the
strondes.

But thilké sec, which hath no wane,
Is clepéd the Great Oceane,
Out of the which arise and come
The highé flodés all and some.
Is none so litel wellé spring,
Which therenetaketh hisbéginníng,
And lich a man that lacketh breth
By wey of kindé so it geth
Out of the see and in ayein,
The water, as the bokés sain.

"Of Elements the propretés
How that they stonden by degres,
As I have told nowmight thou here,
My godé sone, all the matere
Of erthe, of water, afre and fire.
And for thou saist, that thy desire
Is for to witen overmore
The forne of Aristotles lore,
He saith in his entendément
That yet there is an Element
Above the foure, and is the fífte
Set of the highé Goddes yifte,
The which that *orbis* clepéd is.
And therupon he telleth this,
That as the shellé hole and sounde
Encloseth all abouté rounde
Whatthing within an ey¹ belongeth,
Right so this *orbis* underfongeth
These Elementés everychone
Which I have spoke of one and one.

"But over this now take good
hede,

My soné, for I wol procede
To speke upon Mathématique,
Which grounded is on Theorique.
The Science of Astronomy
I thenke for to specify,
Withouté which to tellé pleíne

¹ *Ey*, egg.

All other Science is in veine
Toward the scole of erthly thinges.
For as an egle with his winges
Fleeth above allé that men finde,
So doth this Science in his kinde.

"Benethe upon this erthé here
Of allé thingés the matere,
As tellen us they that ben lerned,
Of thing above it stont govérned,
That is to sain of the planétes
The chelés bothe and eke the hetes,
The chaunces of the worlde also,
That we Fortúné clepen so
Among the mennés nación,
All is through constellación;
Wherof that some man hath the
wele,

And some men have diseses fele
In love as well as other thinges.
The state of realmés and of kinges
In time of pées, in time of werre,
It is conceivéd of the sterre.
And thus saith the Naturien,
Whiche is an Astronomien.
But the Divine saith other wise,
That if men weré good and wise
And plesant unto the Godhede
They shulden nought the sterrés
drede.

For o man if him well befallé
Is moré worth than ben they alle
Towardés him that weldeth all.
But yet the lawe origináll,
Which he hath set in the natúres,
Mot worchen in the créatúres,
That therof may be none obstácle
But if¹ it stonde upon miracle
Through praier of some haly man.
And forthý so as I began
To speke upon Astronomy
As it is write in the clergý,
To telle how the planétés fare,
Some parte I thenké to declare,
My sone, unto thin audiéce.

¹ *But if*, unless.

"**Astronomy** is the Science
Of wisdom and of high conning
Which maketh a man have know-
leching

Of sterrés in the fermament,
Figuré, cercle and movémént
Of eche of hem in sondry place,
And what betwene hem is of space,
How so they move or stondé fast,
All this it telleth to the last.
Assembled with Astronomy
Is eke that ilke Astrology,
The which in jugéménts accompteth
Theffect what every sterre amount-
eth.

And how they causen many a wonder
To the climáts¹ that stond hem
under.

And for to telle it moré pleine

- These oldé philosóphres saine
- That *orbis* which I spake of er
Is that which we fro therthe afer
Beholde, and firmament it calle,
In which the sterrés stonden alle,
Among the which in speciáll
Planetés seven principáll
There ben, that mannés sighte
demeth

By thorizont as to us semeth.
And also there ben Signés twelve,
Which have her cercles by hem selve
Compásséd in the zodiaque
In which they have her places take,
And as they stonden in degre
Her cercles more or lassé be
Made after the proportion
Of therthé, whose condición
Is set to be the foundamént
To susteine up the firmamént.
And by this skill a man may knowe,
The moré that they stonden lowe
The moré ben the cercles lasse,
That causeth why that somé passe
Her düé cours to-fore an other.

¹ *Climáts*, regions, climes.

But now, my levé deré brother,
As thou desirest for to wite
What I finde in the bokés write,
To telle of the Planetés Seven
How that they stonde upon the
heven,

And in what point that they ben in,
Take hedé, for I woll begin,
So as the philosóphre taught
To Alisaundre and it betaught,
Wherof that he was fully taught
Of wisdom which was him betaught.

"Beneth all other stant the Mone,
The which hath with the See to done
Of flodés high and ebbés lowe
Upon his chaunge it shall be knowe.
And every fissh which hath a shelle
Mote in his governauncé dwelle
To wexe and wane in his degre,
As by the Mone a man may se,
And all that stant upon the grounde
Of his moistúre it mot be founde.
All other sterrés, as men finde,
Ben shinend of her owné kinde
Out take only the moné light,
Which is nought of him selvé
bright,

But as he taketh it of the Sonne.
And yet he hath nought all full
wonne
His light that he nis somdele
derke.

But what the let is of that werke
In almagest¹ it telleth this.
The Monés cercle so lowe is,
Wherof the Sonne out of his stage
Ne seth him nought with full viságe
For he is with the ground beshaded,
So that the Mone is somdele faded
And may nought fully shiné clere.
But what man under his powere
Is bore, he shall his placé chaunge
And seché many londés straunge.

¹ *Almagest*, Ptolemy's collection of the ob-
servations of the old astronomers.

And as of this condici3n
The Monés disposici3n
Upon the lond of Alemaigne
Is set, and eke upon Britaigne,
Which is now clepéd Engelonde,
For they travaile in every lond.

"Of the Planetés the secónde
Above the Mone hath take his
bonde

Mercúre, and his natúre is this,
That under him who that bore is,
In boke he shall be studi3us
And in writingé curi3us
And slowe and lustles to travaile
In thing whiche ellés might availe.
He loveth ese, he loveth rest,
So is he nought the worthiést.
But with somdelé besinesse
His hert is set upon richesse.
And as in this condici3n
Theffect and disposici3n
Of this Planete and of his chaunce
Is most in Borgone and in Fraunce.

Next to Mercure as woll befallé
Stant that Planeté which men calle
Venús, whose constellaci3n
Govérneth all the naci3n
Of lovers, where they spede or none,
Of which I trowé thou be one.
But whiderward thin happés wende,
Shall this Planété shewe at ende,
As it hath do to many mo,
To somé wel, to somé wo.
And nethéles of this Planéte
The most partý is softe and swete.

"For who that therof taketh his
berth

He shall desiré joy and merth,
Gentíl, curtéis and debonaire
To speke his wordés softe and faire,
Such shall he be by wey of kinde.
And over all where he may finde
Plesaunce of love, his herté boweth
With all his might and ther he
woweth,

Venus of lové the goddésse
Is clepéd, but of wantonnesse
The climate of her lechery
Is most comúne in Lumbardy.

"Next unto this Planéte of love
The brighté Sonne stant above,
Which is the hinderer of the night
And furtherer of the daiés light,
As he which is the worldés eye,
Through whom the lusty compaignie
Of foulés by the morwé singe,
The freshe flourés sprede and
springe,

The highétre the ground beshadeth,
And every mannés herté gladdeth.
And for it is the Hede Planete,
How that he sitteth in his fete,
Of what richesse, of what nobléy
These bokés telle, and thus they
say.

"Of golde glistrend spoke and
whele

The sonne his carte¹ hath faire and
wele,

In whiche he sitte, and is coróned
With brighté stonés enviroind,
Of which if that I speké shall
There be to-fore in speciáll
Set in the front of his coróne
Thre stonés, which that no persóne
Hath upon erthe, and the first is
By namé clepéd licuchis.
That other two be clepéd thus *
Astrices and ceramius.

In his coróne, also behinde,
By oldé bokés as I finde,
There ben of worthy stonés thre
Set ech of hem in his degre,
Wherof a cristall is that one,
Which that coróne is set upon.
The secónde is an adamant.
The thridde is noble and avenaunt,
Which clepéd is ydríades.
And over this yet nethéles

¹ Carte, chariot.

Upon the *sidés* of the werke,
After the writing of the clerke,
There sitten *five stonés* mo,
The *smaragdine* is one of, *tho*,
Jaspis and *elitropius*
And *vendides* and *jácinctus*.
Lo, thus the *coróne* is beset,
Wherof it shineth well the bet,
And in such wise his light to sprede
Sit with his *diadéme* on hede
The *sonné* shinend in his *carte*.
And for to lede him swithe and
smarte

After the brighté *daies* lawe
There ben ordeinéd for to drawe
Four hors his chare and him withall,
Wherof the *namés* telle I shall.
Erítheús the first is hote,
The which is red and shineth hote,
The second *Acteós* the bright,
Lampés the thriddé courser hight,
And *Philogéus* is the ferth,
That bringen light unto this erth
And gone so swifte upon the
heven,

In foure and twenty *hourés* even
The *carté* with the brighté *sonne*
They drawé, so that over *ronne*
They have under the *cercles* high
All middel erthe in *suche* an *hie*.¹

"And thus the *sonne* is over all
The *Chefe Planéte* imperiall,
Above him and beneth him thre
And thus betwene hem regneth he
As he that hath the middel place
Among the Seven, and of his face
Be glad all erthly *creätúres*
And taken after the *natúres*
Her ese and *recreación*.
And in his *constellación*
Who that is bore in *speciáll*,
Of good will and of *liberall*
He shall be founde in *allé* place
And also stonde in *mochel* grace

Toward the *lordés* for to serve
And great *profite* and thank de-
serve.

And over that it causeth yit
A man to be *subtl* of wit,
To worch in *golde*, and to be wise
In every thing which is of *prise*.
But for to speken in what *coste*
Of all this erth he regneth *moste*,
As for *wisdóm* it is in *Grece*.
Where is *appropred* *thilké* *spiece*.

"Mars the *planété* *bataillous*
Next to the *sonné* *glorióus*
Abové stant and doth *merveiles*
Upon the fortune of *batailes*.
The *conqueroürs* by *daies* olde
Were unto this *planété* *holde*.
But who that his *nativité*
Hath take upon the *propreté*
Of *Martés* *disposición*
By wey of *constellación*,
He shall be *fiers* and fool *hastife*
And *désiroüs* of *werre* and *strife*.
But for to tellen *redely*
In what *climáte* most *communly*
That this *Planéte* hath his *effecte*,
Suid is, that he hath his *aspecte*
Upon the *Haly Londe* so cast,
That there is no *pees* *stedéfast*.

"Abové Mars upon the *heven*
The *Sixté Planete* of the Seven
Stant *Jupiter* the *delicate*,
Which causeth *pees* and no *debate*.
For he is *clepéd* the *Planéte*,
Which of his *kindé* *softe* and *swete*
Attempreth all that to him *longeth*.
And whom this *Planete* under-
fongeth

To stonde upon his *regiment*.¹
He shall be *meke* and *paciért*
And *fortunate* to *marchandý*
And *lusty* to *delfcacý*
In every thing which he shall do.
This *Jupiter* is *cause* also

¹ *Hie*, haste.

¹ *Regiment*, rule.

Of the sciēce of lightē werkes,
 And in this wisē tellen clerkes
 He is the planete of delices.
 But in Egipte of his offices
 He regneth most in speciāll,
 For there be lustés over all
 Of all that to this life befalleth.
 For there no stormy weder falleth,
 Which mightē grevé man or beste,
 And eke the londe is so honéste,
 That it is plenteous and pleine,
 There is no idel ground in veine.
 And upon such felicité
 Stant Jupiter in his degre.

“The highest and aboven alle
 Stant that Planété, which men calle
 Saturnus, whose complexión
 Is colde, and his condición
 Causeth malice and cruelté
 To him the whose nativité
 Is set under his governaunce.
 For all his werkés ben grevaunce
 And enemý to mannés hele,
 In what degre that he shall dele.
 His climate is in orient,
 Where that he is most violent.

“Of the Planetes by and by,
 How that they stonde upon the sky.
 Fro pointtopoint as thou might here
 Was Alisaundre made to lere.
 But over this touchēd his lore
 Of thing that they him taughtē more
 Upon the scolés of clergý,
 Now herken the philosophy.

“He which departeth day fromight,
 That onē derke that other bright,
 Of seven daiés made a weke;
 A month of fourē wekés eke,
 He hath ordeinéd in his lawe;
 Of monthés twelve and eke forth-
 drawe

He hath also the longē yere.
 And as he set of his powére
 Accordant to the daiés seven
 Planétés seven upon the heven,

As thou to-fore hast herd devise,
 To speké right in such a wise
 To every monthē by him selve
 Upon the heven, of signés twelve
 He hath after his ordinall
 Assigned one in speciāll,
 Wherof so as I shall rehersen
 The tidés of the yere diversen.
 But plainly for to make it knowe
 How that the signés sit a rowe,
 Eche after other by degre
 In substaunce and in propreté
 The zodiáque comprehendeth
 Within his cercle and it appendeth.

“The firste of whichē nethéles
 By name is clepéd Ariés,
 Which lich a wether of stature
 Resembled is in his figúre.
 And as it saith in almageste
 Of sterrés twelve upon this beste
 Ben set, wherof in his degre
 The wombe hath two, the heved
 hath thre,
 The taile hath seven, and in this wise,
 As thou might heré the devise,
 Stant Aries, which hote and arie
 Is of him self, and in partie
 He is the réceipt and the hous
 Of mighty Mars the bataillous.
 And overmore eke as I finde
 The Creator of alle kinde
 Upon this Signé first began
 The world, whan that he madé man,
 And of this constellación
 The verray operación
 Availeth, if a man therinne
 The purpose of his werk beginne,
 For than he hath of propreté
 Good spede and great felicité.

“The twelvē monthés of the yere
 Attitled under the powére
 Of thesē twelvē signés stonde,
 Wherof that thou shalt understonde
 This Aries out of the twelve
 Hath Marche attitled for him selve,

Whan every brid shall chese his
make,

And every nedder and every snake
And every reptile which may move,
His might assaieth for to prove
To crepen out ayein the sonne,
Whan Ver¹ his seson hath begonne.

“Taurus the seconde after this
Of Signés which figúred is
Unto a bullé, drie and colde,
And as it is in bokés tolde
He is the hous appurtenaunt
To Venus somdele dísordaúnt.
This bulle is eke with sterrés set,
Through which he hath his hornés
knet

Unto the taile of Aries,
So is he nought there sterrélés.
Upon his brest eke eightétene
He hath, and eke as it is sene
Upon his tail stonde other two,
His month assignéd eke also
Is Averl, which of his shoures
Minístreth way unto the floures.

“The thridde Signe is Gemini,
Which is figúred redely
Lich to two twinnés of man kinde,
That naked stonde. And as I
finde,

They ben with sterrés wel bego.
The heved hath parte of thilké two,
That shine upon the bullés taile,
So ben they both of o parasle.
But on the wombe of Gemini
Ben fivé sterrés nought forthý.
And eke upon the fete be twey,
So as these oldé bokés say,
That wisé Tholomeus wrote.
His propre monthé wel I wote
Assignéd is the lusty May,
Whan every brid upon his lay
Among the grené levés singeth,
And love of his pointuré stingeth
After the lawés of nature

¹ Ver, the Spring.

The youthe of every créature.

“Cancér after the reule and space
Of Signés halt the forthé place.
Like to the crabbe he hath sem-
blaunce

And hath unto his retinaunce
Sixtené sterrés, whei of ten,
So as these oldé wisé men
Describe, he bereth on him to-fore
And in the middle two before
And four he hath upon his ende,
Thus goth he sterréd in his kende,
And of him self is moist and colde
And is the propre hous and holde
Which apperteineth to the Mone
And doth what longeth him to done.
The month of Juín unto this Signe
Thou shalte after the reule assigne.

“The fifté Signe is Leo hote,
Whos kinde is shapé drie and hote,
In whom the Sonne hath herber-
gage.

And the semblaunce of his ymage
Is a león, which in baillie
Of sterrés hath his purpartie,
The fouré which as Cancer hath
Upon his endé, Leo tath
Upon his heved, and thanné neste
He hath eke foure upon his breste,
And one upon his tail behinde.
In oldé bokés as we finde.
His propre month is Juil by name,
In which men pleien many a game.

“After Leó Virgó the nexte
Of Signés clepéd is the sexte,
Wherof the figure is a maide,
And as the philosóphre saide,
She is the welth and the rising,
The lust, the joy and the líking
Unto Mercure. And soth to say
She is with sterrés well bescie,
Wherof Leó hath lent her one,
Which sit on high her heved upon.
Her wombe hath fivé, her fete also
Have other five, and ever mo

Touchend as of complexión
 By kindly disposition
 Of drie and cold this maiden is.
 And for to tellen over this
 Her month as thou shalte under-
 stonde,
 Whan every felde hath corne in
 honde
 And many a man his backe hath
 plied,

Unto this signe is Augst applied.
 "After Virgó to reknen even
 Libra sit in the nombre of seven,
 Which hath figúre and resembłaunce
 Unto a man which a balaunce
 Bereth in his honde as for to weie,
 In boke and as it may be seie.
 Diversé sterrés to him longeth,
 Wherof on heved he underfongeth
 First thre, and eke his wombe hath
 two,

And down beneth eight other mo.
 This signe is hote and moisté both,
 The whiché thingés be nought loth
 Unto Venús, so that alofte
 She resteth in his hous full ofte,
 And eke Saturnus often hied
 Is in this signe and magnified.
 His propre month is said Septembre,
 Which yiveth men cause to re-
 membre,

If any sore be left behinde
 Of thing which grevé may to kinde.

"Among the Signés upon height
 The signé, whiche is nombred eight;
 Is Scorpio, which as felón
 Figúred is a Scorpíon.

But for all that yet nethélesse
 Is Scorpio nought sterrélesse.
 For Libra graunteth him his ende
 Of eighté sterrés, where he wende,
 The which upon his heved assised
 He bereth, and eke there ben devised
 Upon his wombé sterrés thre
 And eight upon his taile hath he.

Which of his kinde is moist and colde
 And unbehovely manyfolde.

He harméth Venus and empeireth,
 But Mars unto his hous repeireth,
 But ware whan they to-gider dwellen.
 His propre monthe is, as men tellen,
 Octobre, which bringeth the kalende
 Of Winter, that cometh next suénde.

"The ninth signe in Novembre
 also,

Which folweth after Scorpio,
 Is clepéd Sagittarius,
 The whos figúre is markéd thus ;
 A monstre with a bowe on honde,
 On whom that sondry sterrés stonde,
 Thilke eight of whiche I spake to-
 fore,

The which upon the tail ben lore
 Of Scorpio the heved all faire
 Be spreden of the Sagittaire,
 And eight of other stonden even
 Upon his wombe, and other seven
 There stonden on his tail behinde,
 And he is hote and drie of kinde.

To Jupiter his hous is fre.
 But to Mercure in his degre,
 For they be nought of one assent,
 He worcheth great empeirément.

This signe hath of his propreté
 A monthé, whiche of duçté
 After the seson that befalleth
 The ploughés oxe in winter stalleth.
 And fire into the halle he bringeth
 And thilké drinke of which men
 singeth,

He torneth must into the wine,
 Than is the larder of the swine.
 That is Novembre which I mene,
 Whan that the leef hath lost his grene

"The tenthé Signé drie and colde,
 The which is Capricornus tolde,
 Unto a gote hath resembłaunce.
 For whosé love and áqueintaunce
 Within his housé to sojorne
 It liketh well unto Satorne.

But to the Mone it liketh nought,
For no profit is theré wrought.
This Signe as of his propreté
Upon his heved hath sterrés thre
And eke upon his wombé two
And twey upon his taile also.
Decembre after the yerés forme,
So as the bokés us enforme,
With daiés shorte and nightés longe
This ilké Signe hath underfonge.

“Of tho that sitte upon theheven
Of Signés in the nombre eleven
Aquariús hath take his place
And stant well in Saturnés grace,
Which dwelleth in his herbergage.
But to the Sonne he doth outrage.
This Signe is verrailly resembled
Lich to a man which halte assembled
In either honde a water spout,
Wherof the stremés rennen out.
He is of kindé moist and hote,
And he that of the stérres wote
Saith, that he hath of sterrés two
Upon his heved, and bene of tho
That Capricorn^a hath on his ende.
And as the bokés maken minde
That Tholoméus made him selve,
He hath eke on his wombé twelve,
And twey upon his endé stonde.
Thou shalte also this understonde,
The frosty coldé Janevere,
When comen is the newé yere,
That Janus with the double face
In his chare hath take his place
And loketh upon bothé sides
Some dele toward the winter tides,
Some dele toward the yere suénde,
That is the monthé belongénde
Unto this Signe, and of his dole
He yiveth the firsté primerole.¹

“Thetwelfthé, which is last of alle
Of signés, Piscis men it calle,
The which, as telleth the scripture,
Bereth of two fisshes the figure.

So is he colde and moist of kinde,
And eke with sterrés as I finde
Beset in sondry wise, as thus
Two of his ende Aquarius
Hath lent unto his heved, and two
This Signe hath of his owne also
Upon his wombe, and over this
Upon his ende also there is
A nombre of twenty sterrés bright,
Which is to sene a wonder sight.
Toward this signe into his hous
Comth Jupiter the glorióus,
And Venus eke with him accordeth
To dwellen, as the boke recordeth.
The Month unto this signe ordeined
Is Februar, which is bereined.
And with londflodés in his rage
At fordés letteth¹ the passage.

“Now hast thou herd the propreté
Of Signes, but in his degré
Albumazare yet over this
Saith, so as therthé parted is
In fouré, right so ben devised
Thesignés twelve, and stonde assised
That eche of hem in his partie
Hath his climate to justifie.
Wherof the firsté regiment
Toward the parte of orient
From Antióche and that contré
Góvernéd is of Signés thre,
That is Cancér, Virgó, Leó.
And towardé occident also
From Armeny, as I am lerned,
Of Capricorne it stant góvernéd,
Of Piscis and Aquarius.
And after hem I findé thus
Southward fro Alisaundré forth
Tho Signés, whiché most ben worth
In góvernaunce of that doaire,²
Libra they ben and Sagittaire
With Scorpio, which is conjoint
With hem to stonde upon that point
Of Constantnople the cité,
So as the bokés tellen me.

¹ *Primerole*, primrose.

¹ *Letteth*, hinders.

² *Doaire*, province.

The last of this divisiön
 Stant untoward Septemtrion,
 Where as by wey of purveiaünce
 Hath Aries the governaünce
 Forth with Taurüs and Gemini.
 Thus ben the Signés proprely
 Devided, as it is reherced,
 Wherof the londés ben diversed.

“Go thus, my sone, as thou
 might here,

Was Alisaundre made to lere
 Of hem that weren for his lore.
 But now to loken overmore
 Of other sterrés how they fare
 I thenke hereafter to declare,
 So as king Alisaundre in youth
 Of him that suché signés couth
 Enforméd was to-fore his eye
 By night upon the sterrés sigh.

“Upon sondry creaciön
 Stant sondry operaciön,
 Some worcheth this, some worcheth
 that ;

The fire is hote in his estate
 And brenneth what hemayatteigne,
 The water may the fire restreigne,
 The which is colde and moist also.
 Of other thinge it fareth right so
 Upon this erthe among us here.
 And for to speke in this manére
 Upon the heven, as men may finde
 The sterrés ben of sondry kinde
 And worchen many sondry thinges
 To us that bene her underlinges.
 Among the whiché forth withall
 Nectánabús in speciáll,
 Which was an astronomien
 And eke a great magicien
 And undertake hath thilke emprise,
 To Alisaundre in his apprise
 As of magiqué naturele
 To knowe, enformeth him somdele
 Of certein sterrés what they mene,
 Of which he saith there ben fiftene.
 And sondrily to everichone

A gras belongeth and a stone,
 Wherof men worchen many a
 wonder

To setté thing bothe up and under.

“To telle right as he began
 The firsté sterre Aldeboran,
 The clerest and the most of alle,
 By righté namé men it calle,
 Which liche is of condiñiön
 To Mars and of complexiön
 To Venus, and hath therupon
 Carbunculum his propre stone.
 His herbe is Anabulla named,
 Which is of great vertúe proclamed.

“The seconde is nought vertulés
 Clota, or ellés Pliades
 It hatte and of the Monés kinde
 He is. And also this I finde,
 He taketh of Mars complexiön,
 And lich to such condiñiön
 His stone appropred is Cristall,
 And eke his herbe in speciall
 The vertuouüs Fenél it is.

“The thriddé, which comth after
 this,

Is hote Algol the cleré rede,
 Whiche of Satorne as I may rede
 His kindé taketh and eke of Jove
 Complexiön to his behove.
 His propre stone is Diamoant,
 Which is to him most áccordaunt.
 His herbé, which is him betake,
 Is hote Eléborum the blacke.

“So as it falleth upon lot
 The fourthé sterre is Alhaiot,
 Which in the wise as I saide er
 Of Satorne and of Jupiter
 Hath take his kinde, and therupon
 The Saphir is his propre stone,
 Marrubium his herbe also,
 The which accorden bothe two.

“And Canis major in his like
 The fifté sterre is of magiqué,
 The whosé kinde is Venerien,
 As saith this astronomien.

His propre stone is said Berille,
But for to worche and to fulfille
Thing which to this Sciencé falleth,
There is an herbé, which men
calleth

Saveine, and that behoveth nede
To him that woll his purpos spede.

"The sixté suende after this
By namé Canis minor is.
The which sterre is Mercuriáll
By wey of kinde, and forth withall
As it is written in the carte
Complexió he taketh of Marte.
His stone and herbe as saith the
scole

Ben Achatés and Primerole.

"The seventh sterre in speciáll
Of this Sciencé is Ariall,
Which sondry nature underfongeth.
The stone which propre unto him
longeth,

Gorgonza proprely it hight.
His herbe also, which he shall right,
Upon the worching as I mene
Is Celidoiné fresshe and grene.

"Sterre Ala corvi upon height
Hath take his place in nombre of
eight,

Which of his kindé mot performe
The will of Marte and of Satorne,
To whom Lapacia the gret
Is herbé, but of no beyete.
His stone is Honochinus hote,
Through which men worchen great
riote.

"The ninthé sterré faire and vele
By name is hote Alaëzele,
Which taketh his propre kindé thus
Bothe of Mercure and of Venus.
His stone is the grene Emeraude
To whom is yoven many a laude.
Saulge is his herbe appurtenaunt
Aboven all the remenaunt.

"The tenthé sterre is Almareth,
Which upon life and upon deth

Through kinde of Jupiter and Marte
He doth what longeth to his parte.
His stone is Jaspe and of Plantaine
He hath his herbé souveraine.

"The sterre eleventh is Venenas,
The whose natúre is, as it was,
Take of Venús and of the Mone
In thing which he hath for to done.
Of Adamaunt is that perrie,
In whiche he worcheth his maistrie.
Thilke herbe also, which him be-
falleth,

Cicorea the boke him calleth.

"Alpheta in the nombre sit
And is the twelfté sterré yit,
Of Scorpio which is govérned,
And taketh his kinde as I am lerned
And hath his virtue in the stone
Which cleped is Topazion.
His herbé propre is Rosmarine,
Which shapen is for his covine.

"Of thesé sterrés which I mene,
Cor Scorpionis is thrittene,
The whos natúré Mart and Jove
Have yoven unto his behove.
His herbe is aristolochy,¹
Which folweth his astronomy.
The stoné which this sterre alloweth,
Is Sardis which unto him boweth.

"The sterré which stant next the
last,

Natúre of him this namé cast
And clepen him Botercadent,
Which of his kind obediént
Is to Mercure and to Venus.
His stone is said Crisolitus.
His herbe is clepéd Satureie,
So as these oldé bokés saie.

"But now the lasté sterre of alle
The Taile of Scorpio men calle,
Which to Mercure and to Satorne
By wey of kindé mot retorne

¹ *Aristolochy*, miswritten "astrology." Cornelius Agrippa, *De Occult. Phil.*, lib. I., cap. 32, gives the plants under *Cor Scorpionis* as *Aristolochia* and *Crocus*.

After the preparatiön
Of düë constellatiön.
The Calcidoine unto him longeth
Which for his stone he underfongeth.
Of Majoran his herbe is groundel.
Thus have I said how they ben
founded

Of every sterre in speciáll,
Which hath his herbe and stone
withall,

As Hermes in his bokés olde
Witnéssé bereth, of that I tolde.

"Now hast thou herd, in suche
a wise

These noble philosóphres wise
Enformeden this yongé king
And made him have a knowleching
Of thing which first to the partie
Belongeth of philosophie,
Which Theoriqué clepéd is,
As thou to-fore hast herde er this.
But now to speke of the secónde,
Whiche Aristotle hath also founde
And techeth how to speké faire,
Whiche is a thing full necessaire
To counterpeisé the balaunce,
Where lacketh other suffisaunce.

"Above all ertily créätüres
The Highé Maker of natüres
The Word to man hath yove alone,
So that the speche of his persone
Or for to lese, or for to winne
The hertés thought which is
withinne,

May shewé what it woldé mene.
And that is no where ellés sene
Of kindé with none other beste.
So shulde he be the more honést,
To whom God yaf so worthy a yifte,
And loké well that he ne shifte
His Wordés to none wicked use,
For Word the techér of vertuse
Is clepéd in philosophy.
Wherof touchéndé this party
Is rhetoriqué the sciéce

Appropred to the reverence
Of Wordés that ben resonáble.
And for this art shall be vailáble
With goodly wordés for to like
It hath Gramaire, it hath Logiqué,
That serven both unto the speche.
Gramairé first hath for to teche
To speke upon congruité.
Logique hath eke in his degre
Betwene the trouthe and the fals-
hode

The pleiné wordés for to shode,¹
So that nothing shall go beside
That he the right ne shall decide,
Wherof full many a great debate
Reforméd is to good estate
And pees susteigné up alofte
With esy wordés and with softe,
Where strengthé shuldé let it falle.
The philosóphre amongés alle
Forthý commendeth this sciéce,
Which hath the reule of eloquence.
In stone and gras vertúe there is,
But yet the bokés tellen this,
That Worde above all ertly thinges
Is vertuóus in his doínges,
Where so it be to evil or good.
For if the Wordés semen good
And be well spoke at mannés ere
Whan that there is no trouthé there,
They done full oft full great deceit.
For whan the Word to the conceipt
Descordeth in so double a wise,
Such Rhetoriqué is to despise
In every place and for to drede.

"For of Ulixes thus I rede,
As in the boke of Troy is founde,
His eloquence and his facóunde
Of goodly wordés which he tolde
Hath made that Anthenor him
solde

The town whiche he with treson wan.
Worde hath beguiléd many a man,
With word the wildé beste is daunted,

¹ *Shode*, divide, discriminate.

With word the serpent is en-
chaunted,
Of wordés mong the men of armes
Ben woundés heléd with the
charmes,
Where lacketh other medicíne
Worde hath under his disciplíne
Of sorcerié the caretés,
The wordés ben of sondry sectes,
Of evil and eke of good also,
The wordés maken frende of fo,
And fo of frende, and pees of werre,
And werre of pees, and out of herre
The word the worldés cause en-
triketh

And reconcileth who on him liketh.
The worde under the cope of heaven
Set every thing or odde or even.
With word the Highé God is plesed,
With word the wordés ben appesed,
The softé word the loudé stilleth,
Where lacketh good the word ful-
filleth

To make amends for the wronge.
Whan wordés medlen with the songe,
It doth plesauncé well the more.
But for to loke upon the lore,
How Tullius his rhetoríque
Componeth, there a man may pike
How that he shall his wordés set.
How he shall lose, how he shall knet,
And in what wise he shall pro-
nounce

His talé pleiné without frounce.
Wherof ensample if thou wilt seche,
Take hede and rede whilom the
speche

“Of Julius and Cicero,
Which consul was of Romé tho,
Of Caton eke, and of Silene
Behold the wordés hem betwene,
Whan the tresón of Cateline
Discovered was, and the covine
Of hem that were of his assent
Was knowe and spoke in parlement,

And axéd howe and in what wise
Men sholden done him to juise.
Silanus first his talé tolde
To trouth and as he was beholde
The comun profit for to save,
He saide how treson shuldé have
A cruel dethe. And thus they
speke,

The consul both and Caton eke,
And saiden that for suche a wronge
There may no peiné be to stronge.
But Julius with wordés wise
His talé tolde all other wise,
As he which wolde her detherespíte,
And foundeth howe he might excite
The juges through his eloquénce
Fro deth to torné the senténce
And set her hertés to pité.
Now tolden they, now toldé he :
They speken pleine after the lawe ;
But he the wordés of his sawe
Coloúreth in an other wey
Spekénd. And thus betwene the
twey

To trete upon this jugément
Made eche of hem his argument.
Wherof the talés for to here
There may a man the scolé lere
Of Rhetoriqué the eloquence,
Whiche is the seconde of Science
Touchéndé to Philosophie,
Wherof a man shall justifie
His wordés in dispútesón
And knette upon conclusión
His argument in suche a forme,
Which may the pleiné trouthe en-
forme

And the subtlí cautéle abate,
Whiche every true man shall debate.

“The firsté, whiche is Theorique,
And the secondé Rhetorique
Sciénces of Philosophy,
I have hem tolde as in party,
So as the philosóphre it tolde
To Alisaundre. And now I wolde

Tell of the thriddé, what it is,
The which Practiqué clepéd is.

"**Practiqué** stant upon thre
thinges

Toward the governaunce of kinges.
Wherof the firste Ethique is named,
The whose Sciéncé stant proclaimed
To teché of vertue thilké reule,
How that a King him self shall reule
Of his morál condition

With worthy disposition,
Of good living in his persóné,
Which is the chefe of his coróné.
It maketh a kinge also to lerne
Howe he his body shall gouverne,
Howe he shall wake, how he shall
slepe,

How that he shall his helé kepe
In mete, in drinke, in clothing eke.
There is no wisdom for to seke
As for the reule of his persone,
The which that this sciéncé allone
Ne techeth as by wey of kinde
That there is nothing left behinde.

"That other point, wulch to
practique

Belongeth, is Ecónomique,
Which techeth thilké honesté,
Through which a King in his degré
His wife and child shal reule and
guie

So forth with all the compaignie
Which in his houshold shall abide,
And his estate on every side
In such manéré for to lede
That he his houshold ne mislede.

"Practique hath yet the thriddé
apprise,

Which techeth how and in what wise
Through his purveié ordonaunce
A King shall set in governaunce
His realne, and that is Policie
Which longeth unto Regalie
In time of werre, in time of pees,
To worship and to good encrees

Of clerke, of knight, and of mar-
chaunt,

And so forth all the remenaunt
Of all the comun people about
Withinné burgh and eke without
Of hem that ben artificers,
Whiche usen craftes and mestiers,
Whose art is clepéd mechanic;
And though they ben nought allé
like,

Yet nethéles how so it falle,
O¹ lawé mot gouverne hem alle,
Or that they lese, or that they winne,
After the state that they ben inne.

"Lo, thus this worthy yongé king
Was fully taught of every thing
Which mighté yive entendément
Of good reule and good regiment
To suche a worthy prince as he.
But of verráy necessité
The philosóphre him hath betake
Five points, which he hath under-
take

To kepe and holde in observaunce
As for the worthy governaunce
Which longeth to his Regalie
After the reule of Policie.

"**To every man** belongeth lore,
But to no man belongeth more
Than to a King which hath to lede
The people als for his kinghede.
He may hem bothé save and spille,
And for it stant upon his wille
It sit him well to ben avised
And the vertúes which are assised
Unto a Kingés regiment²
To take in his entendément,
Wherof to tellen as they stonde
Hereafterward now woll I fonde.
Among the Vertues one is chefe
And that is Trouthé, which is lefe
To God and eke to man also,
And for it hath ben ever so,
Taught Aristotlc as he well couth

¹ O, one.

² Regiment, rule.

BOOK VII.—HOW A KING WAS TAUGHT.

To Alisaundre, how in his youth
He shulde of Trouthé thilké grace
With all his holé herte embrace,
So that his word be trewe and pleine
Toward the world, and so certeine
That in him be no double speche.
For if men shuldé Trouthé seche
And found it nought within a King,
It were an unsitténdé¹ thing.

The worde is token of that within,
There shall a worthy king begin
To kepe his tunge and to be trewe,
So shall his price ben ever newe.
Avisé him every man to-fore
And be well ware, er he be swore,
For afterwarde it is to late
If that he wolde his word debate.
For as a King in speciáll
Above all other is principáll

- Of his powér, so shulde he be
 - Most vertuóus in his degre.
- And that may well be signified
By his coróne and specified.

“The gold betokeneth excellence,
That men shuld done him reverence
As to her legé souveraine.
The stonés, as the bokés saine,
Commended ben in treble wise.
First they ben hard and thilke
assise

Betokeneth in a King constauñce,
So that there shall no variaunce
Be found in his condición.
And also by description
The vertue whiche is in the stonés,
A verray signe is for the nonés
Of that a king shall ben honést
And holdé trewely his behest
Of thing which longeth to kinghede.
The brighté colour, as I rede,
Which is in the stonés shinénd,
Is in figure betokenénd
The cronique of this worldés fame
Which stant upon his godé name.

¹ *Unsitténdé*, unbecoming.

The cercle, which is rounde aboute
Is token of all the londe aboute,
Which stant under his gerarchie,
That he it shall well kepe and guie.
And for that Trouthe how so it falle
Is the Vertue Souveraine of alle
That longeth unto regiment,
A talé which is evident
Of Trouthe in commendación,
Toward thin enformación,
My sone, herafter thou shalt here
Of a croníque in this matere.

As the cronique it doth reherce,
A soldan whilom was of Perse,
Which Daires hight, and Ytaspi
His fader was. And sothe it is,
That through wisdóm and high
prudénce

More than for any reverénce
Of his lignáge as by descent
The regne of thilke empire he hent.
And as he was him selfé wise
The wisé men he held in prise,
And sought hem out on every side
That toward him they shulde abide.
Among the whiché thre there were,
That most service unto him bere
As they which in his chambre
lighen

And all his counceill herd and sighen.
Her namés ben of straungé note,
Harpaghes was the firsté hote,
And Manachaz was the secúnde,
Zorobabel, as it is founde
In the croníqué, was the thridde.

This soldan what so him betidde
To hem he tristé most of alle,
Wherof the case is so befallé.
This lord, which hath conceptés
depe,

Upon a night whan he hath slepe,
As he which hath his wit disposed,
Touchend a point hem hath opposed.
The kingés question was this,
Of thingés thre which strongest is,

The Wine, the Woman or the King?
And that they shulde upon this
thing

Of her answeré avised be,
He yaf hem fully daiés thre
And hath behote hem by his feith
That who the besté reson saith
He shall receive a worthy mede.

“Upon this thing they token hede
And stoden in dispútesón,
That by divers opinión
Of arguments that they have holde
Harpaghes first his talé tolde
And said, how that the strength of
kinges

Is mightiest of allé thinges.
For King hath power over man,
And man is he which reson can,
As he which is of his nature
The mosté noble creatiure
Of allé tho that God hath wrought.
And by that skill it semeth nought,
He saith, that any erthly thing
May be so mighty as a King.
A King may spille, a King may
save,

A King may make of lorde a knave
And of a knave a lord also,
The power of a King stant so,
That he the lawés overpasseth.
What he woll maké lasse he lasseth.
What he woll maké more he moreth.
And as a gentil faucon soareth,
He feeth that no man him reclaimeth,
But he alone all other tameth
And stant him self of lawé fre.
Lo, thus a Kingés might, saith he,
So as his reson can argúe,
Is strengest and of most valúe.

“But Manachaz saith other wise,
That Wine is of the more emprise,
And that he sheweth by this way.
The Wine full oft taketh away
The reson fro the mannés herte,
The Wine can make a creple sterte

And a deliver¹ man unwelde,
It maketh a blind man to behelde
And a bright eyed semé derke,
It maketh a lewdé man a clerke,
And fro the clerkés the clergý
It taketh away, and cowardý
It torneth into hardiéssé,
Of avarice it maketh largesse.
The Wine maketh eke the good
blood,

In which the soulé, which is good,
Hath chosen her a resting place
While that the life her woll embrace.
And by this skillé Manachaz,
Answeréd hath upon this cas
And saith, that Wine by wey of
kind

Is thing which may the hertés bind
Well moré than the Regalie.

“Zorobabel for his partic
Said as him thoughté for the best,
That Women ben the mightiest.
The Kingé and the Vinour also
Of Women comen bpthé two.
And eke he said, how that man hede
Through strengthe unto the woman-
hede

Of lové, where he woll or none,
Obeié shall, and therupon
To shewe of Women the maistrie
A talé whiche he sigh with eye
As for ensample he toldé this.

“How Apemen, of Besazis
Which daughter was, in the paleis
Sittend upon his highé deis,
Whan he was hottest in his ire
Toward the great of his empire,
Cyrus the King tiraunt she toke.
And only with her goodly loke
She made him debonaire and meke,
And by the chin and by the cheke
She luggeth him right as her list,
That now she japeth and now she
kist

¹ Deliver, free of movement, lithe.

And doth with him what ever her
liketh,

Whan that she loureth than he
siketh,

And whan she gladeth he is glad.
And thus this King was overlad
With hiré which his lemman was.

"Among the men is no solas
If that there be no Woman there,
For but if that the Woman were
This worldés joic were awaye.
Through hem men finden out the
wey

To knighthode and to worldés fame,
They make a man to dredé shame
And honour for to be desired.
Through the beauté of hem is fired
The dart of which Cupidé throweth,
Wherof the jolif peiné groweth
Which al the worlde hath under fote.
A Woman is the mannés bote,
His life, his deth, his wo, his wele.
And this thing may be shewéd wele,
How that Womén ben good and
kinde,

For in ensample thus I finde.

"Whan that the duke Admetus lay
Sike in his bed, that every day
Men waiten whan he shuldé dey,
Alcest his wife goth for to prey
With sacrifice unto Minerve,
As she which woldé thank deserve,
To wite answére of the goddesse,
How that her lorde of his sikennesse,
Wherof he was so wo beseine,
Recover might his hele ayeine.
Lo, thus she cride and thus she
praide,

Till atté last a vois her saide,
That if she woldé for his sake
The maladfé suffre and take
And deie her self, he shuldé live.
Of this answer Alcest hath yive
Unto Minervé great thonking,
So that her dethe and his living

She chese with all her hole entent,
And thus accorded home she went.
Into the chambre whan she came,
Her housébonde anon she name
In bothe her armés and him kist,
And spake unto him what her list.
And therupon within a throwe
The goodé wife was overthrowe
And deied, and he was hole in
haste.

So may a man by reson taste,
How next after the God above
The trouthe of Women and the love,
In whom that allé grace is founde,
Is mightiest upon this grounde
And most behovely manyfolde.

"Lo, thus Zorobabel hath tolde
The tale of his opinión.
But for finall conclusion,
What strengest is of erthly thinges
The Wine, the Women or the
Kinges,

[alle
He saith, that Trouthe above hem
Is mightiest, how ever it falle.
The Trouthe how so it ever come
May for no thing ben overcome.
It may well suffre for a throwe,
But atté last it shall be knowe.
The proverbe is, who that is trewe,
Him shall his whil¹ never rewe.
For how so that the causé wende
The trouthe is shameles atté ende.
But what thing that is trouthélés
It may nought well be shamélés,
And shamé hindereth every wight.
So proveth it, there is no might
Withouté Trouthe in no degre.
And thus for trouthe of his decré
Zorobabel was most commended,
Wherof the question was ended
And he receivéd hath his mede
For Trouthé, which to mannés nede
Is most behovelich over all.
Forthy was Trouthe in speciáll

¹ *Whil*, time.

The firste point in observaunce
 Betake unto the governaunce
 Of Alisaundre, as it is saide ;
 For therupon the ground is laide
 Of every Kingés regiment,
 As thing which most conveniént
 Is for to set a king in even
 Bothe in this worlde and eke in
 heven.

“*Next after Trouthe* the se-
 counde

In Policie as it is founde,
 Which serveth to the worldés fame
 In worship of a Kingés name,
 Largesse it is, whose privilege
 There may non avarice abregé.
 The worldés good was first comúne,
 But afterward upon Fortune
 Was thilké comun profit cessed.
 For whan the people stood en-
 cressed

And the lignáges woxen great,
 Anone for singular beyete
 Drough every man to his partie,
 Wherof come in the first envíe
 With great debate and werrés
 stronge,

And last among the men so longe
 Till no man wisté who was who
 Ne which was frende ne which
 was fo.

Till atté laste in every londe
 Within hem self the people fonde,
 That it was good to make a King
 Which might appesen all this thing
 And yivé right to the lignáges
 In parting of her heritáges
 And eke of all her other good.
 And thus above hem allé stood
 The King upon his regaly,
 As he which hath to justify
 The worldés good fro covetise.
 So sit it well in allé wise
 A King betwene the more and lesse
 To sette his herte upon Largesse

Toward him self and eke also
 Towarde his people. And if nought
 so,

That is to sain, if that he be
 Toward him selfé large and fre
 And of his people take and pille,
 Largessé by no wey of skille
 It may be said, but Avarice,
 Which in a Kingé is a great Vice.

“A King behoveth eke to fle
 The Vice of Prodegalité,
 That he mesúre in his expence
 So kepé that of indigence
 He may be sauf. For who that
 nedeth,

In all his werk the wors he spedeth.
 As Aristotle upon Chaldee
 Ensamplé of great auctorité
 Unto king Alisaundre taught
 Of thilké folk that were unsaught¹
 Toward her King for his pillage.
 Wherof he bad in his coráge
 That he unto thre points entende
 Where that he wolde his good de-
 spende.

“First shulde he loke how that
 it stood

That all were of his owné good
 The yiftés which he woldé yive,
 So might he wel the better live.

“And eké he must taken hede
 If there be cause of any nede
 Which oughté for to be defendéd,
 Er that his goodés ben despended.

“He mote eke as it is befallé
 Amongés other thingés alle
 Se the desértés of his men,
 And after that they ben of ken
 And of estate and of mérite
 He shall hem largélich aquite,
 Or for the werre, or for the pees,
 That none honour fall in decrees
 Which mighté torne into diffame,

¹ *Unsaught*, out of accord (First English, saht, peace, reconciliation).

But that he kepe his godé name,
So that he be nought holde unkinde.
For in cronique a tale I finde,
Which speketh somdele of this
matere,

Herafterward as thou shalte here.

“*In Rome* to pursue his right
There was a worthy pouer knight
Which came aloné for to sain
His causé, when the court was plein
Where Julius was in preséce.
And for him lacketh of despense
There was with him none advocate
To maké plee for his estate.
But though him lacké for to plede
Him lacketh nothing of manhede.
He wisté well his purse was pouer,
But yet he thought hisright recouer,
And openly pouerte aleide
To themperour, and thus he saide:

‘O Julius, lord of the lawe,
Behold, my counseil is withdrawe
For lacke of gold to thine office
After the lawés of justice.
Help, that I haddé counseil here
Upon the trouthe of my matere.’

And Julius with that anone
Assignéd him a worthy one.
But he him self no word ne spake.
This knight was wroth and found a
lake¹

In themperour, and saidé thus :

“O thou unkindé Julius,
Whan thou in thy batail were
Up in Aufrique, and I was there,
My might for thy rescousse I did
And putté no man in my stede.
Thou wost what woundés there I had,
But here I findé the so bad,
That the ne list to speke o worde
Thine owné mouth, nor of thin horde
To yive a florein me to helpe.
How shulde I thanné me beyelpe²
Fro this day forth of thy largesse,

¹ Lake, luck.

² Beyelpe, boast.

Whan such a great unkindénesse
Is found in suche a lorde as thou ?’
This Julius knew well inough
That all wassoth which he him tolde,
And for he woldé nought ben holde
Unkind, he toke his cause on honde,
And as it were of Goddés sonde,
He yaf him good inough to spende
For ever unto his livés ende.

“And thus shuld every worthy
king

Take of his knightés knouleching :
Whan that he sigh they hadden nede,
For every service axeth mede.
But other, which have nought de-
served

Through vertue but of japés served,
A King shall nought deservé grace,
Though he be large in suche a place.

“It sit well every king to have
Discretión whan men him crave,
So that he may his yifté wite ;
Wherof I finde a talé write,
How Cinichus a pouveré knight
A sommé which was over might,
Praied of his king Antigonus.
The kinge answerdé to him thus
And said, how such a yifté passeth
His pouer estate. And than he
lasseth

And axeth but a litel peny,
If that the king wold yive him any.

“The king answeárd, it was to
small

For him which was a lord réall,
To yive a man so litel thinge,
It were unworship in a kinge.

“By this ensample a King may
lere,

That for to yive is in manere,
For if a King his tresor lasseth
Without honour and thankeles
passeth,
Whan he him self woll so beguile
I not who shall compleigne his while

Ne who by right him shall releve,
But nethéles this I beleve
To helpe with his owné londe
Belongeth every man his honde
To set upon necessité.

"And eke his Kingés realté
Mote every legé man comfórté
With good and body to supporte,
Whan they se causé resonáble.
For who that is nought entendáble
To holde upright his Kingés name,
Him oughté for to be to blame.

"Of Policie and over more
To speke in this matéré more
So as the philosóphre tolde,
A King after the reule is holde
To modifie and to adresse
His yiftés upon such largesse
That he mesuré nought excede.

"For if a King fall into nede,
It causeth ofté sondry thinges,
Whiche are ungoodly to the kinges.
What man will nought him self
mesúre,

Men seen ful ofté that mesúre
Him hath forsake. And so doth he
That useth prodegalité,
Which is the moder of pouérte,
Wherof the londés ben desérte.
And namély whan thilké vice
About a King stant in office
And hath witholde of his party
The covetoúsc flaterý
Which many a worthy King de-

ceiveth,
Er he the fallace apperceiveth
Of hem that serven to the glose.
For they that connen plesé and
glose

Ben, as men tellen, the noríces
Unto the fostring of the Vices,
Wherof full ofté nethéles
A King is bláméd giltéles.

A Philosóphre, as thou shalt here,
Spake to a King of this matéré

And said him well how that flatróurs
Coupáble were of thre erroúrs.

One was toward the goddes high,
That weren wroth of that they sigh,
The mischefe which befallé sholde
Of that the falsé flatroure tolde
Toward the King. Another was,
Whan they by sleight and by fallas
Of feigné wordés make him wene
That black is white and blew is grene
Touchend of his condición.

For whan he doth extorción
With many an other Vicé mo,
Men shall nought finden one of tho
To grucche or speké there ayein,
But holden up his oile¹ and sain,
That all is well what ever he doth.
And thus of fals they maken soth,
So that her Kingés eye is blent
And wot nought how the worlde is
went.

The thidde erroúr is harm com-
mune,
With which the people mot com-
mune

Of wrongés that they bringen inne.
And thus they werchen treble sinne
That ben flatróurs about a king.
There mighté be no worsé thing
About a kingés regaly,
Than is the Vice of Flattery.
And nethéles it hath ben used
That it was never yet refused.
As for to speke, in Court Reáll.
For there it is most speciáll
And may nought longé be forbore.
But whan this Vice of hem is bore
That sholden the Vertúes forth
bringe,

And Trouthe is tornéd to Lesinge,
It is, as who saith, ayein kinde,
Wherof an old ensample I finde.

"Among these other talés wise
Of philosóphres in this wise

¹ His oile, his affirmation.

I rede, how whilom two there were
And to the scolé for to lere
Unto Athenés fro Cartáge
Her frendés whan they were of age,
Hem sende. And there they
stoden longe

Till they such lore have underfonge
That in her timé they surmounte
All other men, that to accompte
Of hem was tho the greté fame.
The first of hem his righté name
Was Diogénés thanné hote,
In whom was foundé no riote.
His felaw Aristippus hight,
Which mochel couthe and mochel
might.

But atté lasté soth to sain
They bothé tornen home ayein
Unto Cartáge and scolé lete.

This Diogénés no beyete
Of worldés good or lasse or more
Ne soughté for his longé lore,
But toke him only for to dwelle
At home. And as the bokés telle,
His house was nigh to a rivér
Beside a brigge, as thou shalt here.
There dwelleth he and taketh his
rest,

So as it thought him for the best,
To studie in his philósophie,
As he which woldé so defic
The worldés pompe on every side.

“But Aristippe his boke aside
Hath laid, and to the court he wente,
Where many a wile and many a
wente¹

With flaterý and wordés softe
He caste and hath compasséd ofte
How he his princé mighté plesé.
And in this wise he gate him ese
Of veine honoúr and worldés good,
The londés reule upon him stood.
The king of him was wonder glad,
And all was do what thinge he bad,

¹ Wenté, turn.

Bothe in the courte and ekewithout
With flaterý he brought about
His purpos of the worldés werke,
Which was ayein the state of clerke,
So that philosophý he lefte
And to richesse him self upleste.
Lo, thus had Aristippe his will.
But Diogénés dwelté still
At home and lokéd on his boke.
Hesoughté nought the worldés croke
For veine honoúr ne for richesse,
But all his hertés besinesse
He setté to be vertuóús.
And thus within his owné hous
He liveth to the suffisaunce
Of his havíng. And fell perchaunce,
This Diogéne upon a day,
And that was in the month of May,
Whan that these herbés ben hol-
sóme,

He walketh for to gader some
In his gardin, of which his joutes¹
He thoughté have, and thus aboutes
Whan he hath gadred what him
liketh,

Hesethim thanné downe and piketh
And wisshe his herbés in the flood
Upon the which his gardin stood
Nigh to the brigge, as I tolde ere.
And hapneth while he sitteth there,
Cam Aristippus by the strete
With many hors and routés grete
And straught unto the brigge he
rode

Where that he hovéd and abode,
For as he cast his eyé nigh
His felaw Diogéne he sigh,
And what he dede he sigh also,
Wherof he saidé to him so :

“O Diogéné, God the spede.
It weré certés litel nede
To sitten here and woütés pike²
If thou thy princé coutheest like²

¹ Joutes or jotes, beets; also legumes used in old cookery.

² Like, please.

So as I can in my degre.
 'O Aristippe,' ayein quod he,
 'If that thou coutesth so as I
 Thy wortés piké truelý,
 It were als litel nede or lasse
 That thou so worldly wol compasse
 With flaterfê for to serve,
 Wherof thou thenkest to deserve
 Thy princés thank and to purcháce
 Howthoumight stonden in his grace
 For getting of a litel good.
 If thou wolt take into thy mood
 Resón, thou might by reson deme,
 That so thy princé for to queme¹
 Is nought to reson accordaúnt,
 But it is greatly descordaunt
 Unto the scolés of Athene.'

"Lo, thus answerd Diogéne
 Ayein the clerkés flaterie.
 But yet men sene thessamplerie
 Of Aristippe is well received
 And thilke of Diogéne is weived.
 Office in court and gold in coffre
 Is now, men sain, the philosóphre
 Which hath the worship in the halle.
 But flaterfê passeth alle
 In chambre whom the court avaun-
 ceth.

For upon thilké lot it chaunceth
 To be belovéd now a day.

"I not if it be ye or nay,
 How Danté the poéte answerde
 To a flatroure, the tale I herde.
 Upon a strife betwene hem two
 He said him, there ben many mo
 Of thy servauntés than of min.
 For the poéte of his covine
 Hath none that woll him cloth and
 fede,

But a flatróúr may reule and lede
 A king with all his londe about.
 So stant the wisé man in doubt
 Of hem that to solfê drawe,
 For such is now the comun lawe.

¹ *Queme*, please.

But as the comune vois it telleth,
 Where now that flaterfê dwelleth
 In every londe under the sonne,
 There is full many a thing begonne
 Which weré better to be lefte;
 That hath be shewed now and este
 "But if a prince him woldé
 reule

Of the Romains after the reule
 In thilké time as it was used,
 This Vicé shuldé be refused
 Wherof the princes ben assoted.
 But where the pleiné trouth is noted,
 There may a princé wel conceive
 That he shall nought him self de-
 ccive

Of that he hereth wordés pleine,
 For him ther nought¹ by reson
 pleigne

That warnéd is er him be wo.
 And that was fully provéd tho,
 Whan Romé was the worldés chese,
 The sothésaier tho was lefe,
 Which woldé nought the trouthé
 spare

But with his wordés plaine and bare
 To themperóúr his sothés tolde,
 As in cronique it is witholde,
 Here afterwarde as thou shalt here
 Accordend unto this matere.

"To se this olde ensemplarie,
 That whilom was no flaterie
 Toward the princes, wel I findé,
 Wherof so as it comth to minde,
 My sone, a tale unto thin ere,
 While that the worthy princes were
 At Rome, I thenke for to telle.
 For whan the chaunces so befelle,
 That any emperóúr as tho
 Victórie had upon his fo
 And so forth came to Rome ayein,
 Of treble honóúr he was certáin,
 Wherof that he was magnified.

"The first, as it is specified,

¹ *Nought*, ought not.

Was, whan he cam at thilké tide,
The chare, in which he shuldé ride
Four whité stedés sholdé drawe ;
Of Jupiter by thilké lawe
The cote hé shuldé were also.
His prisonérs eke sholden go
Endlong the chare on either honde,
And all the noble of the londe
To-fore and after with him come
Ridénd and broughten him to Rome
In token of his chivalrie,
And for none other flaterie.
And that was shewéd forth withall
Where he sat in his chare reáll
Beside him was a ribald set
Which had his wordés so beset
To themperoúr in all his glorie
He saidé : ‘ Take into mémorie,
For all this pompe and all this pride
Let no justicé gon aside,
But know thy self, what so befallé.
For men seen ofté timé fallé
Thing which men wendé sicker
stonde.

Though thou victórie have on honde,
Fortúné may nought stonde alwey ;
The whele perchaunce another day
May torne and thou might over-
throwe,

There lasteth nothing but a throwe.’

“ With thesé wordés and with mo
This ribald, which sat with him tho,
To themperoúr his talé tolde.

And overmore what ever he wolde
Or were it evil or were it good
So plainly as the trouthé stood,
Hespareth nought but spekeþ it out,
And so might every man about,
The day of that solempnité,
His talé tellen as wele as he
To themperoúr all openly.

And all was this the causé why,
That while he stood in his noblesse
He shulde his vanité repressé
With suché wordés as he herde.

“ Lo now, how thilké time it ferde
Toward so high a worthy lorde.
For this I finde eke of recórde,
Which the cronique hath auctorized,
What emperoúr was entronized
The firsté day of his coróne,
Where he was in his reál throne
And helde his fest in the paleis
Sitténd upon his highé deis,
With all the lust that may be gete
Whan he was gladdest at his mete,
And every minstrell haddé pleide
And every disour haddé saide
What most was plesant to his ere,
Than atté lasté comen there
His masons for they sholden crave
Where that he woldé be begrave,
And of what stone his sepultúre
They sholden make, and what
sculptúre

He wolde ordeigné therupon.
Tho was there flaterië none
The worthy princes to bejape,
The thing was otherwise shape
With good counsëile ; and otherwise
They were hem selven thanné wise
And understoden well and knewen ;
Whan suché softé windés blowen
Of flaterý into her ere
They setten nought her hertés there.
But whan they herdé wordés feigned
The pleiné trouth it hath des-
deigned¹

Of hem that weren so discrete.
So toke the flaterer no beyete
Of him that was his princé tho.
And for to proven it is so,
A talé, which befell in dede,
In a cronique of Rome I rede.

Cesár upon his reáll throne
Where that he sat in his persone
And was highést in all his pris,
A man which wolde make him wise

¹ Feigned words undervalued the plain truth in men of such discernment.

Fell down knelénd in his presence
 And did him such a reverence
 As though the highé God it were,
 Men hadden great merveilé there
 Of the worshipé which he dede.
 This man aros fro thilké stede
 And forth withall the samé tide
 He goth him up and by his side
 He set him down as pere and pere
 And saide, 'If thou that sittest here
 Art God which allé thingés might,
 Than have I do worship aright
 As to the God; and other wise,
 If thou be nought of thilke assise,
 But art a man suche as am I,
 Than may I sit the fasté by,
 For we be bothe of oné kinde.'

"Cesár answerde and saide: 'O
 blinde,

Thou art a fol, it is well sene
 Upon thy self. For if thou wene
 I be a God, thou dost amis
 To sit where thou seést God is.
 And if I be a man also,
 Thou hast a great folié do,
 Whan thou to such one as shall deie
 The worship of thy God away
 Hast yiven so unworthily.
 Thus may I prové redely,
 Thou art nought wise.' And they
 that herde,

How wisely that the king answerde,
 It was to hem a newé lore,
 Wherof they dradden him the more,
 And broughten nothing to his ere
 But if it trouthe and reson were.
 So ben there many in such a wise,
 That feignen wordés to be wise
 And all is verray flaterý
 To him which can it well aspy.

"The kindé flatrour can nought
 love

But for to bring him self above,
 For how that ever his maister fare,
 So that him self stonde out of care

Him reccheth nought. And thus
 ful ofte

Deceivéd ben with wordés softe
 The kingés that ben innocent.
 Wherof as for chastitément
 The wisé philosóphre saide:
 'What king that so his tresure laide
 Upon such folke, he hath the lesse
 And yet ne doth he no largesse
 But harmeth with his owné honde
 Him self and eke his owné londe.
 And that by many a sondry wey,
 Wherof if that a man shall sey
 As for to speke in generall
 Where such thing falleth over all
 That any king him self misreule,—
 The philosóphre upon his reule
 In speciáll a causé set

Whiche is and ever hath be the let
 In governaunce about a king
 Upon the mischefe of the thing,
 And that, he saith, is Flaterý,
 Wherof to-fore as in party,
 What Vice it is, I have declared.
 For who that hath his wit bewared¹
 Upon a flatrour to beleve,
 Whan that he weneth best acheve
 His godé world, it is most fro.
 And for to proven it is so
 Ensamples there ben many one,
 Of whiche if thou wolt knowen one,
 It is behovely for to here
 What whilom fell in this matere.

Among the kingés in the bible

I finde a tale and is credsble
 Of him, that whilom Achab hight,
 Which had all Israel to right,
 But who that couthe glosé softe
 And flater, such he set alofte
 In great estate and made hem riche.
 But they that spoken wordés liche
 To trouthe and wolde it nought for-
 bere

For hem was none estate to bere,

¹ Bewarred, spent.

The courte of suché toke none hede.
Till atté last upon a nede,
That Benedab kinge of Surie,
Of Israel a great partie,
Which Ramoth Galaïd was hote,
Hath seséd. And of that riôte
He toke counsefle in sondry wise,
But nought of hem that weren wise.
And nethéles upon this cas
To strengthen him, for Josephas
Which thanné was kinge of Judee
He sendé for to come, as he
Which through frendshíp and alli-
aúnce

Was next to him of áqueintaúnce.
For Joram sone of Josaphath
Achabbés doughter wedded hath,
Which highté fairé Godelie.
And thus cam into Samará
King Josaphat, and he found there
• The king Acháb. And whén they
were

To-gider spekend of this thing,
This Josaphat saith to the king,
How that he woldé gladly heré
Some true prophét in this matere,
That he his counseil mighté yive
To what point it shall be adrive.
And in that timé so befell
There was such one in Israel,
Which set him all to flaterý,
And he was clepéd Sedechý,
And after him Acháb hath sent.
And he at his commaúndément
To-fore him cam, and by a sleight
He hath upon his heved on height
Two largé hornés set of bras,
As he whiche all a flatroure was,
And goth rampénd as a león
And cast his hornés up and down
And bad men ben of good espeire,
For as the hornés persen thaire
He saith, withouten resistéce,
So wist he well of his sciéce
That Benedab is discomfite.

Whan Sedechy upon this plite
Hath told this tale unto his lorde,
Anone they were of his accorde
Prophétés falsé many mo
To bere up oile¹ and allé tho
Affermen that which he hath tolde;
Wherof the king Acháb was bolde
And yaf hem yiftés all aboute.
But Josaphat was in great doubte
And held fantósme all that he herde,
Praiénd Acháb how so it ferde,
If there were any other man,
The which of prophecý can,
To here him speke er that they gone.
Quod Achab thanné: 'There is one,
A brothel, which Micheas hight.
But he ne comth nought in my sight
For he hath long in prison laien,
Him likéd never yet to saien
A goodly word to my plesaúce.
And nethéles at thine instaúce
He shall come out, and than he may
Say as he saidé many a day;
For yet he saidé never wele.'
Tho Josaphat began some dele
To gladen him in hope of trouthe,
And bad withouten any slouthe
That men him shuldé fette² anone.
And they that weren for him gone
Whan that they comen where he was
They tolden unto Micheás
The manere how that Sedechý
Declared hath his prophecý.
And therupon they pray him faire
That he woll saie no contraie
Wherof the king may be desplesed,
For so shall every man be esed,
And he may helpe him self also.
Micheas upon trouthe tho
His herté set and to hem saith—
All that belóngé to his feith

¹ To bere up oile, to sustain the affirmation (of Zedekiah). Oil or oile is an old form of oil, yes. "Oil, par ma foi, sire, oil mult volontiers," says each of the false prophets to Ahab. See note, p. 366.

² Fette, fetch.

And of none other feigned thing
That woll he tell unto the king,
Als fer as God hath yive him grace.
Thus came this prophete into place,
Where he the kingés willé herde.
And he therto anone ansérde
And saide unto him in this wise :

‘ My legé lord, for my servíce,
Which trewe hath stonden ever yit,
Thou hast me with prisón aquite.
But for all that I shall nought glose
Of trouthe als far as I suppose ;
And as touchénd of thy bataile
Thou shalt nought of the sothé faile.
For if it liké the to here,
As I am taught in that matere,
Thou might it understandé sone.
But what is afterward to done
Avisé the, for this I sigh,
I was to-fore the throne on high,
Where all the world me thoughté
stode,

And there I herde and understode
The vois of God with wordés clere
Axénd and saide in this manere :
‘ In what thing may I best beguile
The king Achab?’ And for a while
Upon this point they speken fast.
Tho said a spirit atté last :

‘ I undertaké this emprise.’
And God him axeth in what wise.
‘ I shall,’ quod he, ‘ deceive and lie
With flateréndé prophécie
In suché mouthés as he leveth.’

And he which allé thing acheveth,
Bad him go forth and do right so.
And over this I sigh also
The noble people of Israël
Dispers as shepe upon an hill
Without a keper unarraied.

And as they wente about astraidé,
I herde a vois unto hem sain :

‘ Goth home into your hous ayein,
Till I for you have better ordeigned.’
Quod Sedechié : ‘ Thou hast feigned

This tale in angring of the king.’
And in a wrathe upon this thing
He smote Micheen upon the cheke ;
The king him hath rebukéd eke ;
And every man upon him cride.
Thus was he shent on every side
Ayein and into prison ladde,
For so the kinge him selvé badde.
The trouthe mighté nought ben
herde ;

But afterward as it hath ferde,
The dedé proveth his entent.
Acháb to the batailé went,
Where Benedab for all his shelde
Him slough, so that upon the felde
His people goth about astray.
But God, which allé thingés may,
So doth that they no mischefe have.
Her king was dede and they ben
save,

And home ayein in Goddes pees
They wente, and all was founde les¹
That Sedechý hath said to-fore.
So sit it wel a king therfore
To loven hem that trouthe mene.
For atté last it will be sene,
That flaterý is nothing worth.

“ But now to my materé forth
As for to speken overmore
After the philosóphres lore,
The thriddé point of policy
I thinke for to specify.

“ *What is a lord, where men
be none ?*

What ben the men which are allone
Without a kingés governaunce?
What is a king in his legeaunce
Where that there is no lawe inlonde?
What is to také lawe on honde,
But if the jugés weren trewe?
These oldé worldés with the newe
Who that woll take in evidence
There may he se the experience
What thing it is to kepé lawe

¹ *Les, leasings, untruth.*

Through which the wrongés be
withdrawe

And rightwisnesse stant com-
mended,

Wherof the regnés ben amended.

For where the lawé may comúne,

The lordés forth with the comúne

Eche hath his propre duëté.

And eke the kingés réalité

Of bothe his worship underfongeth,

To his estate as it belongeth,

Whiche of his highé worthinesse

Hath to govérné rightwisnesse,

As he which shall the lawé guide.

And nethéles upon some side

• His power stant above the lawe

To yivé both and to withdrawe

The forfet of a mannés life.

But thingés which are excessife

• Ayein the lawe he shal nought do

For lové ne for hate also.

• “The mightés of a king be gret.

But yet a worthy king shall let

Of wrong to done all that he might,

For he which shall the people right,

It sit wel to his regaly

That he him self first justify

Towardés God in his degré.

For his estate is ellés fre

Toward all other in his persóne,

Sauf only to the God alone

Which woll him self a king chastise

Where that none other may suffice.

“So were it good to taken hede

That first a king his owné dede

Betwene the Vertue and the Vice

Redresse, and than of his justice

So set in even the balaúnce

Towardés other in governaúnce,

That to the pouer and to the riche

His lawés mighten stonden liche,

He shall excepté no persone.

But for he may nought all him one

In sondry places do justice,

He shall of his réal office

With wise consideratió

Ordeigne his deputatió

Of suché jugés as ben lerned,

So that his people be govérned

By hem that true ben and wise.

For if the lawe of covetise

Be set upon a jugés honde,

Wo is the people of thilké londe,

For wrong may nought him selven
hide.

But ellés, on that other side,

If lawé stondé with the right

The people is glad and stant upright,

Where as the lawe is resonable,

The comun people stant mevable,

And if the lawé torne amis,

The people also mistornéd is.

“And in ensample of this matere

Of Maxinin a man may here,

Of Romé which was emperour,

That whan he made a governour

By wey of substitutió

Of province or of región,

He woldé first enquire his name

And lete it openly proclame

What man he were, or evil or good.

And upon that his namé stood

Enclined to vertue or to vice,

So wolde he set him in office,

Or ellés put him all away.

Thus held the lawe his righté wey,

Which found no let of covetise.

The world stood than upon the wise,

As by ensample thou might rede

And holde it in thy minde I rede.

In a cronique I findé thus,

How that Gaiús Fabriciús,

Which whilom was consúl of Rome

By whom the lawés yede and come,

Whan the Sampnités to him brought

A somme of gold and him besought

To don hem favour in the lawe,

Toward the gold he gan him drawe

Wherof in allé mennés loke

A part up in his honde he toke,

Which to his mouth in allé haste
He put it for to smelle and taste
And to his eye and to his ere,
But he ne found no comfort there.
And than he gan it to despise
And tolde unto hem in this wise :

‘I not what is with gold to
thrive,

Whan none of all my wittés five
Find favour ne delite therinne,
So is it but a nicé sinne
Of gold to ben to covetoús.
But he is riche and glorious
Which hath in his subjection
Tho men which in possession
Ben riche of gold, and by this skill,
For he may all day whan he will
Or be hem lefe or be hem lothe
Justicé done upon hem bothe.’

“Lo, thus he said. And with
that worde

He throw to-fore hem on the borde
The gold out of his honde anonc,
And said hem, that he woldé none.
So that he kept his liberté
To do justice and equité,
Withouté lucre of such richesse.
There ben now fewe of suche I gesse,
For it was thilké timés used,
That every jugé was refused
Which was nought frend to comun
right,

But they that wolden stonde upright
For trouthe onlv to do justice
Preferréd were in thilke office
To deme and jugé comun lawe,
Which now men sain is all with-
drawe.

“To sette a lawe and kepe it
nought

There is no comune profit sought.
But above allé nethéles
The lawé which is made for pees
Is good to kepé for the best,
For that set allé men in rest.

The rightful emperour Conrade
To kepé pees such lawé made
That none withinné the cité
In destorbaunce of unité
Durst onés meven a matere.
For in his time as thou might here,
What point that was for lawé set
It shuldé for no good be let¹
To what personé that it were.
And this brought in the comun fere
Why every man the lawé dradde,
For there was none which favour
hadde.

So as these oldé bokés sain,
I findé write, how a Romain,
Which consul was of the pretoire, .
Whose namé was Carmidotoire,
He set a lawé for the pees
That none, but he be wepenles,
Shall come into the conseil hous, .
And ellés as malicioús
He shal ben of the lawé dede.
To that statúte, and to that rede
Accorden alle, it shall be so,
For certein causé which was tho.
Now list, what fell therafter sone.
This consul haddé for to done
And was into the feldés ride.
And they him haddé longe abide,
That lordés of the conseil were,
And for him sende, and he cam there
With swerd begert, and hath foryete
Till he was in the conseil seté.
Was none of hem that madé speche
Till he him self it woldé seche,
And founde out the default him selve.
And than he saide unto the twelve
Which of the Senate weren wise :
‘I have deservéd the juíse
In hasté that it were do.’
And they him saiden allé no,
For well they wist it was no vice,
Whan he ne thoughté no malice

¹ For no good be let, be stayed for no money consideration.

But onlich of a litel slouth.
 And thus they leften as for routh
 To do justice upon his gilte,
 For that he shuldé nought be spilte.
 And whan he sigh the maner how
 They wolde him save, he made avow
 With manful herte, and thus he
 saide,

That Romé shuldé never abraide
 His heires whan he were of dawé¹
 That her auncéstre brake the lawe.
 Forthý er that they weren ware,
 Forthwith the samé swerde he bare
 The statute of his lawé kepte,
 So that all Rome his dethe bewepete.

"In other place also I rede,
 Where that a juge his owné dede
 He wol nought venge of lawé broke,
 The king it hath him selven wroke.
 The greté king, which Cámbrisés
 Was hote, a jugé lawéles
 He found, and into rémembraunce
 He did upon him such vengeaunce:
 Out of his skin he was beflain
 All quick, and in that wisé slain,
 So that his skin was shape all mete
 And nailéd on the samé sete,
 Where that his soné shuldé sitte:
 Avise him if he woldé flitte
 The lawé for the covetise,
 There sigh he redy his juise.

"Thus in defalte of other juge
 The king mote otherwhilé juge
 To holden up the righté lawe.
 And for to speke of tholdé dawé
 To take ensample of that was tho,
 I finde a talé write also,
 How that a worthy prince is holde
 The lawés of his londe to holde,
 First for the highé Goddes sake
 And eke for that him is betake
 The people for to guide and lede,
 Which is the charge of his kinghede.

¹ *Whan he were of dawé*, when his days were ended.

"In a cronique I redé thus
 Of the rightfull Ligurgiús,
 Which of Athénés princé was,
 How he the lawe in every cas
 Wherof he shulde his people reule,
 Hath set upon so good a reule
 In all this world that cité none
 Of lawé was so well begone;
 Forth with the trouthe of gover-
 naunce

There was among hem no distaunce,
 But every man hath his encrees;
 There was withouté werré pees,
 Without envî lové stood;
 Richesse upon the comune good
 And nought upon the singular
 Ordeiné was; and the powér
 Of hem that weren in estate,
 Was sauf; wherof upon debate
 There stood no thing, so that in
 reste

Might every man his herté reste.

"And whan this noble rightfull
 king,
 Sigh how it ferde of all this thing
 Wherof the people stood in ese,
 He which for ever woldé plesé
 The highé God whose thank he
 sought,

A wonder thing than he bethought
 And shope, if that it mighté be,
 How that his lawe in the cité
 Might afterward for ever laste.
 And therupon his wit he caste,
 What thing him weré best to feigne,
 That he his purpose might atteigne.
 A parlément and thus he set
 His wisdom where that he beset
 In audience of great and smale,
 And in this wise he tolde his tale:

'God wote, and so ye woten alle,
 Here afterward how so it falle,
 Yet into now my will hath be
 To do justice and equité
 In forthring of común profíte,

Such hath ben ever my delite.
 But of o thing I am beknowe,
 The which my will is that ye knowe.
 The lawé which I toke on honde,
 Was all to-gider of Goddés sonde
 And no thinge of min owné wit,
 So mote it nede enduré yit
 And shall do lenger, if ye will,
 For I wol tellé you the skill.
 The god Mercurius and no man
 He hath me taught all that I can
 Of suché lawés as I made,
 Wherof that ye ben allé glad.
 It was the god and no thng I,
 Which did all this, and now forthy
 He hath commaunded of his grace,
 That I shall come into a place
 Which is foreín, out in an ile,
 Where I mot tarie for a while
 With him to speke and he hath bede.
 For as he saith, in thilké stede
 He shall me suché thingés telle
 That ever while the world shal dwelle
 Athénés shall the better fare.
 But first er that I thider fare,
 For that I woldé that my lawe
 Amongés you ne be withdrawe
 There whilé that I shall be oute,
 Forthý to setten out of doubte
 Both you and me, thus wol I pray,
 That ye me wolde assure and say
 With such an othe as ye woll take,
 That eche of you shall undertake
 My lawés for to kepe and holde.'

"They saiden allé, that they wolde.
 And thereupon they swore here othe,
 That fro that timé that he goth
 Till he to hem be come ayeine
 They shuld his lawés well and pleine
 In every point kepe and fulfill.
 Thus hath Ligurgius his will,
 And toke his leve and forth he went.
 But list now well to what entent
 Of rightwisnessé he did so.
 For after that he was ago,

He shope him never to be founde :
 So that Athénés, which was bounde,
 Never after shuldé be relesed,
 Ne thilké godé lawé cessed,
 Which was for comun profit set.
 And in this wise he hath it knet,
 He which the comun profite
 sought,

The king his owne estate ne rought.¹
 To do profite to the comúne
 He toke of exile the fortune
 And lefte of princé thilke office
 Only for love and for justice,
 Through which he thought, if that
 he might,

For ever after his deth to right
 The cité which was him betake,
 Wherof men ought ensample take
 The godé lawés to avaunce
 With hem which under governaunce
 The lawés havé for to kepe.
 For who that woldé také kepe
 Of hem that firsté lawés founde,
 Als fer as lasteth any bounde
 Of londe her namés yet ben knowe.
 And if it liké the to knowe
 Some of her namés, how they stonde,
 Now herke and thou shalt under-
 stonde.

Of every bienfait the merite
 The God him self it woll aquite.
 And eke full ofte it falleth so,
 The worlde it woll aquite also, *
 But that maynought ben evenliche.
 The God he yiveth the heaven riche,
 The world yifh only but a name
 Which stant upon the godé fame
 Of hem that done the godé dede.
 And in this wisé double mede
 Receiven they that done well here,
 Wherof if that the list to here
 After the fame as it is blowe,
 There might thou well the sothé
 knowe,

¹ Rought, cared for.

How thilke honesté besinesse
 Of hem that first for rightwisnesse
 Among the men the lawés made,
 May never upon this erthé fade.
 For ever while there is a tunge,
 Her namés shall be rede and sung
 And holde in the croniqué write,
 So that the men it sholden wite
 To speké good, as they well oughten,
 Of hem that first the lawes soughten
 In forthing of the worldés pees.
 Unto the Hebrews was Moisés
 The first, and to thegipcíens
 Mercurius, and to Trojéns
 First was Numa Pompilius,
 To Athénés Ligurgius
 Yave first the lawe, and to Gregois,
 Foroneus hath thilké vois,
 And Romulus to the Romans ;
 For suché men that ben vilains,
 The lawe in such a wise ordeigneth,
 That whatman to thelawé pleigneth,
 Be so the jugé stond upright,
 He shall be servéd of his right.
 And so ferforth it is befallé .
 That lawe is come among us alle,
 God leve it moté well bene holde,
 As every king therto is holde.
 For thing whiche is of kingés set,
 With kingés ought it nought be let.
 What king of lawé taketh no kepe
 By lawe he may no regné kepe.
 Dð lawe away, what is a king ?
 Where is the right of any thing,
 If that there be no lawe in londe ?
 This ought a king well understonde,
 As he which is to lawé swore,
 That if the lawé be forbore
 Withouten execución,
 It maketh a lond torne up so down,
 Which is unto the king a sclaudre.
 Forthý unto king Alisaundre
 The wisé philosóphre bad
 That he him selvé first be lad
 Of lawe, and forth than over all

To do justíce in generall,
 That all the widé lond aboute
 The justice of his lawé doubte,¹
 And thanné shall he stonde in rest.
 For therto lawe is one the best
 Above all other erthly thing
 To make a legé drede his king.

“ But how a king shall gete him
 love

Toward the highé God above
 And eke among the men in erthe
 This nexté point, which is the ferthe
 Of Aristotles lore, it techeth,
 Wherof who that the scolé secheth
 What policíe that it is
 The boke reherceth after this.

It nedeth nought that I delate
 The pris which preiséd is algate
 And hath bene ever and ever shall,
 Wherof to speke in speciáll
 It is the vertue of Pité,
 Through which the highé magesté
 Was steréd, whan his sone alight
 And in Pité the world to right
 Toke of the maidé flessh and blood.
 Pité was cause of thilké good,
 Wherof that we ben allé save.
 Well ought a man Pité to have
 And the vertue to set in prise,
 Whan he him self whiche is All Wise
 Hath shewed why it shall bepreised.
 Pité may nought be counterpeised
 Of tiranníe with no peise.
 For Pité maketh a king curteise
 Both in his worde and in his dede.
 It sit well every legé drede
 His king, and to his hest obey.
 And right so by the samé way
 It sit a king to be pitóus
 Toward his people and gracióus
 Upon the reule of governaunce,
 So that he worché no vengeaunce
 Which may be clepéd cruelte.
 Justíce which doth equité

¹ Doubte, fear, reverence.

Is dredful, for he no man spareth
 But in the lond, where Pité fareth
 The king may never faile of love,
 For Pité through the grace above
 So as the philosophre affermeth,
 His regne in good estate confermeth.
 Thapostel Jamés in this wise
 Saith, what man shuldé do juise
 And hath not Pité forth with all,
 The dome of him which demeth all
 He may him self ful soré drede,
 That him shall lacke upon the nede
 To findé Pité whan he wolde.
 For who that Pité woll beholde,
 It is a point of Cristés lore ;
 And for to loken overmore
 It is behovely, as we finde,
 To reson and to lawe of kinde.
 Cassiodore in his aprise telleth :
 'The Regne is sauf, where Pité
 dwelleth.'

And Tullus his tale avoweth
 And saith: What king to Pité boweth
 And with Pité stont overcome,
 He hath that shilde of gracé nome
 Which to the kingés yiveth victoire.

"Of Alisaundre in his histoire
 I rede, how he a worthy knight
 Of sodein wrath and not of right
 Forjugéd hath, and he appelleth.
 And with that word the king qua-
 releth

And saith: 'None is above me.'
 'That wote I wel my lordé,' quod he,
 Fro thy lordshíp appele I nought,
 But fro thy Wrath in all my thought
 To thy Pité stant min appele.'
 The king, which understode him
 wele,

Of puré Pité yave him grace.
 And eke I rede in other place
 Thus saidé whilom Constantine :
 'What emperour that is encline
 To Pité for to be servaunt,
 Of all the worldés remenaunt

He is worthy to ben a lord.'

"In olde bokés of recorde
 Thus finde I write of ensamplaire :
 Trajan the worthy debonaire,
 By whom that Romé stood govérned,
 Upon a time, as he was lerned
 Of that he was to famíliér,
 He saide unto that counseller
 That for to ben an emperour
 His wil was nought for vein honoúr
 Ne yet for reddour¹ of justice,
 But if he might in his office
 His lordés and his people plesé.
 Him thought it were a greater ese
 With love her hertés to him drawe,
 Than with the drede of any lawe.
 For whan a thing is do for doubte,
 Ful ofte it cometh the wors aboute ;
 But where a kinge is pietous
 He is the more graciós,
 That mochel thrift him shall betide
 Which ellés shuldé torne aside.

"To do pité, support, and grace
 The philosophre upon a place
 In his writíng of daies olde
 A tale of great ensample tolde
 Unto the king of Macedoine,
 How betwene Kaire and Babeloine,
 Whan comen is the somer hete,
 It hapneth two men for to mete
 As they shulde entren in a pas
 Where that the wildernessé was,
 And as they wenten forth spekeade
 Under the largé wodés ende,
 That o man axeth of that other :
 'What man art thou, my levé
 brother ?
 Which is thy creaunce and thy
 feith ?'

'I am paíen,' that other saith,
 'And by the lawé which I use,
 I shall nought in my feith refuse
 To loven alle men aliche,
 The pouer both and eke the riche ;

¹ Reddour (*roidour*), rigour.

Whan they ben glad I shall be glad,
And sory whan they ben bestad;
So shall I live in unité
With every man in his degré:
For right as to my self I wolde,
Right so toward al other I sholde
Be graciôus and debonaire.
Thus have I told the soft and faire
My feith, my lawe, and my creaunce.
And if the list for aqueintaunce,
Now tell, what maner man thou art?'
And he answerde upon his part:
'I am a Jewe, and by my lawe
I shall to no man be felawe
To kepe him trouth in word ne dede
But if he be withouté drede
A verray Jew ight as am I.
For ellés I may trewely
Bereve him bothé life and good.'

"The paien herde and understood

And thought it was a wonder lawe;
And thus upon her sondry sawe
Talkénde bothé forth they went.
The day was hote, the sonné brent,
The paien rode upon an asse,
And of his catell more and lasse
With him a riché trusse he ladde.

"The Jew, which all untrouthé hadde

And went upon his feet beside,
Bethought him how he mighté ride,
And with his wordés sligh and wise
Unto the paien in this wise
He said: 'O, now it shall be sene
What thing it is thou woldest mene.
For if thy lawé be certain,
As thou hast tolde, I dare well sain
Thou wolt beholdé my destresse,
Which am so full of werinesse
That I ne may unethé go,
And let me ride a mile or two
So that I may my body ese.'

The paien wold him nought dis-
please

Of that he spake, but in pité
It list him for to knowe and se
The pleinté which that other made.
And for he wolde his herté glade,
He light and made him nothing
straunge,

Thus was there made a newé
chaunge.

The paien goth, the Jewe alofte
Was set upon his assé softe.
So gone they forth carpénde faste
On this and that, till atté laste
The paien mighté go no more
And praide unto the Jew therfore
'To suffre him ride a litel while.'

The Jew, which thought him to
beguile,

Anone rode forth the greté pas
And to the paien in this cas
He saidé: 'Thou hast do thy right
Of that thou haddest me behight
To do succour upon my nede,
And that accordeth to the dede,
As thou art to the lawé holde.
And in such wise, as I the tolde,
I thenke also for my partie
Upon the lawe of Jewerie
To worche and do my duëté.
Thin assé shall go forth with me
With all thy good, which I have
sesed,

And that I wot thou art disesed
I am right glad and nought mispaid.'
And whan he hath these wordés
said,

In allé haste he rode away.

"This paien wot none other way,
But on the grounde he kneleth even,
His handés up unto the heven,
And said: 'O highe sothfastnesse,
That lovest alle rightwisnesse,
Unto thy dome, lorde, I appele,
Beholde and demé my queréle
With humble herte I the beseche,
The mercy bothe and eke the wreche

I set all in thy jugément.
 And thus upon his marrément
 This païen hath made his preiere.
 And than he rose with drery chere
 And goth him forth, and in his gate
 He cast his eye about algate
 The Jewe if that he mighté se.
 But for a time it may nought be,
 Till atté last ayein the night,
 So as God wolde he went aright
 As he which held the highé wey,
 And than he sigh in a valley,
 Where that the Jewé liggend was,
 All bloody, dede upon the gras,
 Which straungled was of a leon.
 And as he lokéd up and down,
 He found his assé fasté by
 Forth with his harnéis redely
 All hole and sound as he it lefte
 Whan that the Jewe it him berefte :
 Wherof he thonkéd God knelende.

"Lo, thus a man may knowe at
 ende,

How the pitoús pité deserveth.
 For what man that to Pité serveth,
 As Aristotle it bereth witénsse,
 God shall his fomen so repressé,
 That they shall ay stonde under fote.
 Pité men sain is thilké rote
 Wherof the vertues springen alle,
 What infortuné that befallé
 In any lond, lack of Pité
 Is cause of thilke adversité ;
 And that alday may shewe at eye,
 Who that the world discretely sigh.
 Good is that every man therfore
 Take hede of that is said to-fore.
 For of this tale and other inowe
 These noble princes whilom drowe
 Her evidence and her apprise,
 As men may finde in many a wise,
 Who that these oldé bokés rede.
 And though they ben in erthé dede,
 Her godé namé may nought deie
 For Pité which they wold obey

To do the dedés of mercý.
 And who this talé redely
 Remembre, as Aristotlé it tolde,
 He may the will of God beholde
 Upon the point as it was ended,
 Wherof that Pité stood commended,
 Whiche is to Charité felawe,
 As they that kepen both o lawe.

"Of Pité for to speké pleine,
 Which is with mercy well beseine,
 Full ofte he wold him selvé peine
 To kepe an other fro the peine.
 For Charité the moder is
 Of Pité, which nothing amis
 Can suffre if he it may amende.
 It sit to every man livénde
 To be pitoús, but none so wele
 As to a king, which on the whele
 Fortune hath set aboven all.
 For in a king, if so befallé
 That his pité be ferme and stable,
 To all the londe it is vailable
 Only through grace of his persone.
 For the pité of him alone
 May all the largé roiaïne save.
 So sit it wel a king to have
 Pité. For this Valcír tolde
 And said, how that by daiés olde
 Godrus, which was in his degree
 King of Athénés the citee,
 A werre he had ayein Dorence.
 And for to take his evidence,
 What shall befallé of the bataile,"
 He thought he wolde him first
 counseile
 With Ápolló, in whom he triste,
 Through whose answeré thus he
 wiste
 Of two points that he mighté
 chese,—
 Or that he wolde his body lese
 And in bataile him selvé deie,
 Or ellés the secónde wey
 To seen his people discomfite.
 But he, which Pité hath parfite

Upon the point of his beleve,
 The people thoughté to releve
 And chese him selvé to be dede.
 Where is now such another hede
 Which woldé for the limmés die?
 And nethéles in some partie
 It ought a kingés herté sterc
 That he his legé men forbere.
 And eke toward his enemies
 Full ofte he may deservé prise
 To take of Pité remembraunce
 Where that he mighté do ven-
 geaunce.

For whan a king hath the victoire
 And than he drawe into memoire
 To do pité in stede of wreche
 He may nought fail of thilké speche
 Wherof arist the worldés fame,
 To yive a prince a worthy name.

“**I rede, how whilom** that
 Pompey,

To whom that Romé must obey,
 A werré had in jeopartie
 Ayein the king of Armenie,
 Which of long time him haddé
 greved.

But atté last it was acheved,
 That he this king discomfit hadde
 And forth with him to Romé ladde
 As prisonér, where many a day
 In sory plite and pouver he lay,
 The coróne on his hede deposed,
 Withinné wallés fast enclosed.
 And with full great humilité
 He suffreth his adversité.
 Pompeié sigh his paciéce
 And toke pité with consciéce,
 So that upon his highé deis
 To-fore all Rome in his paleis,
 As he that wolde upon him rewe,
 Let yive him his coróné newe
 And his estate all full and pleine
 Restoreth of his regne ayein
 And said, ‘it was more goodly thing
 To maké than undone a king,

To him which power had of bothe.’
 Thus they, that weren bothé wrothe,
 Accorden hem to finall pees.
 And yet justicé nethélees
 Was kept and in nothing offended,
 Wherof Pompéy is yet commended.
 There may no king him self excuse
 But if justice he kepe and use,
 Which, for to escheué cruelté,
 He mote attempre with Pité.
 Of cruelté the feloný
 Engendred is of tiranny,
 Ayein the whose condition
 God is him self the champion
 Whose strenghté may no man with-
 stonde.

For ever yet it hath so stonde
 That God a tiraunt over ladde.
 But where Pité the reiné ladde
 There mighté no fortuné last,
 Which was grevoués. But atté last
 The God him self it hath redressed.
 Pité is thilké vertue blessed,
 Which never let his maister falle.
 But Cruelté though it so falle
 That it may regné for a throwe,
 God woll it shall ben over throwe,
 Wherof ensamples ben inough
 Of hem that thilké merel drowe.¹

Of cruelfe I redé thus,
 Whan the tiránt Leoncius
 Was to thempire of Rome arrived,
 Fro which he hath with strenghté
 prived

The pietous Justinián,
 As he which was a cruel man,
 His nase of and his lippés both
 He kutté, for he wolde him loth
 Unto the people and make unable.
 But he which all is merciáble,
 The highé God ordeineth so,
 That he within a time also,

¹ *Thilke merel drowe*, suffered that pain. *Traire la merle*, in old French, meant to expose oneself to danger, endure pain or fatigue (Godefroy).

Whan he was strongest in his ire,
Was shoven out of his empire.
Tiberius the power hadde
And Rome after his will he ladde,
And for Leonce in suche a wise
Ordeineth that he toke juise
Of nase and lippés bothé two,
For that he did another so
Which moré worthy was than he.
Lo, which a fall hath Cruelté,
And Pité was set up ayein.
For after that the bokés sain,
Terbellis. king of Bulgarie
With helpe of his chivalerie
Justinian hath unprisóned
And to thempire ayein coróned.

“**In a cronique** I finde also
Of Siculus, which was eke so
A cruel king like the tempest,
The whom no pité might arrest.
He was the first, as bokés say,
Upon the see which found galéy
And let hem maké for the werre,
As he which all was out of herre ¹
Fro pité and misericorde,
For therto couthe he nought ac-
corde ;

But whom he mightéslain heslough,
And therof was he glad inough.
He had of counseil many one,
Among the whiché there was one,
By namé which Perillus hight.
And he bethought him, how hemight
Unto the tirant do liking.
And of his own ymaginíng
Let forge and make a bulle of bras,
And on the sidé cast there was
A doré, where a man may inne
Whan he his peiné shall beginne
Through fire which that men put
under.

And all this did he for a wonder,
That whan a man for peiné cride,
The bull of bras, which gapeth wide,

¹ Out of herre, unhinged, broken away.

It shuldé seme as though it were
A bellewíng in a mannés ere
And nought the crieng of a man.
But he which alle sleightés can,
The Devil that lith in hellé fast,
Him that it cast hath overcast,
That for a trespas which he dede
He was put in the samé stede,
And was him self the first of alle
Which was into that peiné falle
That he for other men ordeigneth.
There was no man that him com-
pleigneth.

Of tyranný and cruelté
By this ensample a king may se
Him selfe and eke his counseil bothe,
How they ben to mankindé lothe
And to the God abhomináble.
Ensamples that ben concordáble
I finde of other princes mo,
As thou shalt here of time ago.

“**The grete tirant** Dionise,
Which mannés life set of no prise,
Unto his hors full ofte he yafe
The men in stede of corne and
chafe.

So that the hors of thilké stood ¹
Devoureden the mannés blood,
Till fortune atté lasté came
That Hercules him overcame,
And he right in the samé wise
Of this tiránt toke the juise.
As he till other men hath do
The samé deth he deied also,
That no pité him hath socóured
Till he was of his hors devoured.

“Of Lichaón also I finde,
How he ayein the lawe of kinde
His hostés slough and into mete
He made her bodies to ben ete
With other men within his hous.
But Jupiter the glorióús,
Which was commeved of this thing,
Vengeaúnce upon this cruel king

¹ Stood, stud.

So toke that he fro mannés forme
 Into a wolfe him let transforme.
 And thus the cruelté was kid
 Which of long timé he hath hid.
 A wolfe he was than openly,
 The whose natúré prively
 He had in his condición.
 And unto this conclusión
 That tyranny is to despise,
 I finde ensample in sondry wise
 And namélich of hem full ofte,
 The whom Fortúne hath set alofte
 Upon the werrés for to winne.
 But how so that the wrong beginne
 Of tiranny, it may nought laste,
 But suche as they done atté laste
 To other men suche on hem falleth.
 For ayein suché pité calleth
 Vengeaúncé to the God above.
 For who that hath no tendre love
 In saving of a mannés life,
 He shall be foundé so giltife
 That whan he woldé mercy crave,
 In time of nede he shall none have.

“Of the natúré this I finde,
 The fiercé león in his kinde,
 Which goth rampénd aftér his pray,
 If he a man finde in his way
 He woll him slain if he withstonde.
 But if the man couth understonde
 To fall anone to-fore his face
 In signe of mercy and of grace,
 The leon shall of his natúre
 Restreigne his ire in such mesúre
 As though it were a besté tamed,
 And torne away halffing ashamed,
 Thathethemanshall nothing greve.
 How shuldé than a prince acheve
 The worldés grace, if that he wolde
 Destruie a man whan he is yolde
 And stant upon his mercy all?

“But for to speke in speciáll
 There have be such and yet there be,
 Tiraunts, whose hertés no pité
 May to no point of mercy ply,

That they upon her tyranny
 Ne gladen hem the men to slee.
 And as the rages of the see
 Ben unpitous in the tempest,
 Right so may no pité arest
 Of cruelté the great oultrage,
 Which the tiraúnt in his corage
 Engendred hath, wherof I finde
 A talé, which cometh now to minde.

I rede in oldé bokés thus,
 There was a duke, which Spertachus
 Men clepe, and was a werriour,
 A cruel man, a conqueroúr
 With strongé power which he lad.
 For this conditión he had,
 That where him hapneth the victoire,
 His lust and all his mosté gloire
 Was for to slee and nought to save.
 Of ransoms wolde he no good have
 For saving of a mannés life,
 But all goth to the swerde and knife
 So lefe him was the mannés blood.
 And nethéles yet thus it stood,
 So as Fortúne abouté went,
 He fell right heire as by descent
 To Pers and was corónéd king.
 And whan the worship of this thing
 Was falle, and he was kinge of
 Perse,

•
 If that they weren first diverse,
 The tiranniés which he wrought,
 A thousand fold wel more he sought
 Than afterward to do malíce,
 Till God vengeaúncé ayein the vice
 Hath shapé. For upon a tide,
 Whan he was highest in his pride,
 In his rancour and in his hete,
 Ayein the quene of Massegete,
 Which Thamarís that timé hight,
 He madé werre all that he might.
 And she which wolde her lond
 defende

Her owné sone ayein him sende
 Which the defence hath undertake,
 But he discomfit was and take.

And whan this king him had in
 honde,
 He wol no mercy understonde,
 But did him sleen in his presençe.
 The tiding of this violence
 Whan it cam to the moders ere,
 She sende anone ay widé where
 To suché frendés as she had,
 A great powér till that she lad
 In sondry wise, and tho she cast
 How shé this king may overcast.
 And atté last accorded was,
 That in the daunger of a pas,
 Through which this tiraunt shuldé
 pas,
 She shope his power to compas
 With strength of men by such a wey
 That he shall nought escape away.
 And whan she haddé thus ordeigned,
 She hath her owné body feigned
 For fere as though she woldé flee
 Out of her londe. And whan that he
 Hath herde how that this lady fledde,
 So fast after the chace he spedde,
 That he was founde out of array.
 For it betid upon a day
 Into the pas whan he was falle,
 Them busshéments to-breken alle
 And him beclipt on every side,
 That flee ne might he nought aside.
 So that there weren dede and take
 Two hundred thousand for his sake
 That weren with him of his hoste.
 And thus was laid the greté boste
 Of him and of his tyranny.
 It halp no mercy for to cry
 To him which whilom didé none.
 For he unto the queene anone
 Was brought, and whan that she
 him sigh,
 This word she spake and said on
 high :
 ' O man, which out of mannés
 kinde
 Resón of man hast left behinde

And livéd worsé than a beste
 Whom pité mighté nought areste ;
 The mannés blood to shede and
 spille,
 Thou haddest never yet thy fille,
 But now the lasté time is come,
 That thy malfce is overcome ;
 As thou till other men hast do,
 Now shall be do to the right so.'
 Tho bad this lady that men sholde
 A vessel bringe, in which she wolde
 Se the vengeaunce of his jufse
 Which she began anone devise,
 And toke the princes which he ladde,
 By whom his chefe counsél he
 hadde.
 And while hem lasteth any breth,
 She made hem bledé to the deth
 Into the vessel where it stood,
 And whan it was fulfild of blood,
 She casté this tiraunt therinne
 And said him : ' Lo, thus might
 thou winne
 The lustés of thine appetite.
 In blood was whilom thy delite,
 Now shalt thou drinken all thy fille.'
 And thus onlich of Goddes wille
 He which that wolde him selven
 straunge
 To pité, found mercý so straunge
 That he withouté grace is lore.
 " So may it shewé well therefore,
 That cruelté hath no good endé.
 But pité how so that it wende
 Maketh that God is merciáble,
 If there be causé resonáble,
 Why that a King shall be pitoús.
 But ellés if he be doubtóús
 To sleen in cause of rightwisesse,
 It may be said no pitousnesse
 But it is pusillamité,
 Whiche every princé shuldé flee.
 For if pité mesúre excede,
 Knighthodé may nought wel pro-
 cede

To do justise upon the right.
For it belongeth to a knight
As gladly for to fight as reste
To set his legé people in reste
Whan that the werre upon hem
falleth.

For than he mote as it befalleth
Of his knighthode as a león
Be to the people a champion
Withouten any pité feigned.
For if manhodé be restraigned,
Or be it pees or be it werre,
Justicé goth all out of herre,
So that knighthode is set behinde.

“Of Aristoffles lore I finde,
A King shall maké good viságe
That no man knowe of his coráge
But all honouór and worthinesse.
For if a King shall upon gesse
Withouté verray causé drede,
He may be liche to that I rede,—
And though that be liche to a fable,
Thensample is good and resonáble.

“As it by olde daiés fell,
I redé whilón¹ that an hill
Up in the londés of Archade
A wonder dredfull noise it made.
For so it fell that ilké day,
This hill on his childingé lay.
And whan the throwés on him come,
His noisé lich the day of dome
Was ferefull in a mannés thought
Of thing which that they sighé
nought.

But well they herden all aboute
The noise of which they were in
doubte,

As they that wenden to be lore
Of thing which thanné was unbore.
The nere this hill was upon chaunce
To taken his deliveraunce,
The more unbuxomlich he cride;
And every man was fled aside
For drede and left his owné hous.
And atté last it was a mous

The which was bore and to norice
Betake. And tho they helde hem
nice,

For they withouté causé dradde.
Thus if a King his herté ladde
With every thing that he shall here,
Ful ofte he shuldé chaunge his chere
And upon fantasíe drede
Whan that there is no cause of
drede.

Oracé to his princé tolde,
That him were lever that he wolde
Upon knighthode Achillem sue
In time of werré than escheue
So as Thersites did at Troy.
Achilles al his holé joy
Set upon armés for to fight;
Thersites sought all that he might
Unarméd for to stonde in reste.
But of the two it was the beste,
That Áchillés upon the nede
Hath do, wherof his knightlihedé
Is yet commended overall.

King Salomon in speciáll
Saith: ‘As there is a time of pees,
So is a timé nethéles
Of werre, in whiche a prince algate
Shall for the comun right debate
And for his owné worship eke.
But it behoveth nought to seke
Only the werré for worship,
But to the right of his lordship
Which he is holdé to defende
Mote every worthy prince entende
Betwene the simplesse of pité
And the foolhaste of cruelté.
Where stant the verray hardiesse,
There mote a king his herte adresse,
Whan it is timé to forsake
And whan time is also to take
The dedly werrés upon honde,
That he shall for no dredé wonde¹
If rightwisnessé be withall.
For God is mighty over all

¹ Wonde, turn aside.

To furtheren every mannés trouthe;
 But it be through his owné slouthe,
 And namély the kingés nede
 It may nought failé for to spede.
 For he stant oné for hem alle,
 So mote it well the better falle.
 And wel the moré God favoureth,
 Whan he the comun right socoureth.
 And for to se the soth in dede,
 Behold the bible and thou might rede
 Of great ensamples many one,
 Wherof that I wil tellen one.

“**Upon a time** as it befell
 Ayein Judé and Israël,
 Whan sondry kingés comé were
 In purpos to destruíe there
 The people which God kepté tho,
 It stood in thilké daies so,
 That Gedeon, which shuldé lede
 The Goddés folk, toke him to rede
 And sende in all the lond aboute,
 Till he assembled hath a route
 With thritty thousand of defence
 To fight and maké resistance
 Ayein the which hem wolde assaile.
 And nethéles that o bataile¹
 Of thre that weren enemis,
 Was double more than was all his,
 Wherof that Gedeon him drad,
 That he so litel people had.
 But he which allé thing may helpe,
 Where that there lacketh mannés
 helpe,
 To Gedeon his aungel sent
 And bad, er that he further went,
 All openly that he do cry
 That every man in his party
 Which wolde after his owné will
 In his delite abidé still
 At home in any maner wise
 For purchase or for covetise,
 For lust of love or lacke of herte,
 He shuldé nought abouté sterte
 But holde him still at home in pees.

¹ *Bataile, army.*

Wherof upon the morwe he lees
 Wel twenty thousand men and mo
 The which after the cry ben go,
 Thus was with him but only left
 The thriddé parte, and yet God eft
 His aungel send and saidé this
 To Gedeon: ‘If it so is
 That I thin hélp shall undertake,
 Thou shalt yet lassé people take
 By whom my will is that thou spede.
 Forthý to morwe take good hede
 Unto the flood whan ye be come,
 What man that hath the water nome
 Up in his hande and lappeth so,
 To thy part chese out allé tho,
 And him which very is to swinke
 Upon his wombe and lith to drinke
 Forsake, and put hem al away.
 For I am mighty allé wey
 Where as me list min help to shewe
 In godé men though they be fewe.

“This Gedeon awaiteth wele
 Upon the morwe and every dele,
 As God him bad, right so he dede.
 And thus ther lesten in that stedç
 With him thre hundred and no mo,
 The remenaunt was all ago.
 Wherof that Gedcon mervéileth
 And therupon with God counsêileth
 Pleining as ferforth as he dare.
 And God, which woldé he weré ware
 That he shall spede upon his right,
 Hath bede him go the samé night
 And take a man with him to here
 What shall be spoke in this matere
 Among the hethen enemies,
 So may he be the moré wise,
 What afterwarde him shall befallé.
 This Gedeon amongés alle
 Phara, to whom he tristé most,
 By night toke toward thilké host,
 Which loggéd was in a valey,
 To heré what they wolden say.
 Upon his fote and as he ferde
 Two Sarazins spekénd he herde,

Quod one : 'Arede my sweven¹
aright,

Whiche I met² in my slepe to-night.
Me thought I sigh a barly cake,
Which frothe hille his wey hathtake
And comé rollend down at ones,
And as it weré for the nones
Forth in his cours so as it ran
The kingés tent of Madian,
Of Amalech, of Amorie,
Of Amon and of Jebuseie
And many another tenté mo
With greté noise as me thought tho
It threw to grounde and over cast
And all his host so sore agast,
That I awoke for puré drede.'

'This sweven can I well arede,'
Quod thother Sarazin anone,
'The barly cake is Gedeon,
Which fro the hill down sodeinly
Shall come and setté such askry
Upon the kingés and us both,
That it shall to us allé lothe.
For in such drede he shall us bringe,
That if we haddé flight of winge,
The wey one fote in our despeire
We sholden leve and flee in thaire.³
For there shal nothing him with-
stonde.'

Whan Gedcon hath understonde
This talc, he thonketh God of alle,
And privelich aycin he stalle,
So that no life⁴ him hath perceived.
And than he hath fully conceived,
That he shall spede. And therupon
The night suénd he shope to gone
This multitudé to assaile.

Now shalt thou here a great
merveille,
With what wisdómé that he wrought.
The litel people which he brought
Was none of hem that he ne hath

A pot of erthe, in whiche he tath
A light brenning in a cressét,
And eche of hem eke a trompét
Bare in his other hond beside.
And thus upon the nightés tide
Duke Gedeón whan it was derke
Ordeineth him unto his werke,
And parteth than his folke in thre
And chargeth hem that they ne flec,
And taught hem how they shuld
askry

All in o vois par compaigný.
And what worde eke they shuldé
speke,
And how they shulde her pottés
breke

Echone with other, whan they herde
That he him selvé first so ferde.
For whan they come into the stede,
He bad hem do right as he dede.
And thus stalkéndé forth a pas
This noble duke whan timé was
His pot to-brake and loude askryde,
And tho they breke on every side.
The trompé was nought for to seke,
He blewe and so they blewen eke
With such a noise amonge hem
alle,

As though the heven shuldé falle.
The hill unto her vois answérde.
This hoste in the valéy it herde
And sigh how that hill was alight,
So what of hering and of sight
They caughten such a sodein fere,
That none of hem be lefté there.
The tentés holy they forsoke
That they none other good ne toke,
But only with her body bare
They fledde, as doth the wildé hare.
And ever upon the hill they blewe
Till that theysighen time and knewe
That they be fled upon the rage.
And whan they wiste their avaun-
táge,

They fell anone unto the çace.

¹ *Sweven*, dream.

² *Met*, dreamt.

³ In our despair we should leave the way of
going on foot, and fly in the air.

⁴ *No life*, nobody.

"Thus might thouse, how Goddes
grace

Unto the godé men availeth,
But elles ofté time it faileth
To such as be nought well disposed.
This talé nedeth nought be glosed,
For it is openliché shewed,
That God to hem that ben well
thewed

Hath yove and graunted the victoire,
So that thensample of this histoire
Is good for every King to holde.
First in himself that he beholde
If he be good of his living,
And that the folk which he shal bring
Be good also, for than he may
Be glad of many a mery day
In what that ever he hath to done.
For he which sit above the mone
And allé thing may spill and spede
In every cause and every nede,
His godé King so well adresseseth,
That all his fomen he represseth,
So that there may no man him dere.
And also well he can forbere
And suffre a wicked king to falle
In hondés of his fomen alle.

"Now furthermore if I shall
sain

Of my matere and torne ayein
To speke of Justice and Pité
After the reule of Realte,
This may a King well understonde,
Knighthodé mot be take on honde
Whan that it stant upon the nede,
He shall no rightfull causé drede,
No more of werré than of pees,
If he woll stondé blaméles.
For suche a cause a king may have,
That better him is to slee than save;
Wherof thou might ensample finde.
The highé maker of mankinde
By Samuel to Saül bad,
That he shall nothing ben adrad
Ayein king Agag for to fight.

For this the Godhede him behight,
That Agag shall be overcome.
And whan it is so ferforth come,
That Saül hath him descomfite,
The God bad maké no respíte,
That he ne shulde him sleen anone.
But Saül let it overgone
And didé nought the Goddés heste.
For Agag made a great behesté¹.
Of raunsom which he woldé yive.
King Saül suffreth him to live
And feigneth pité forth withall.
But he which seeth and knoweth all,
The highé God, of that he feigneth
To Samuel upon him pleigneth,
And send him word for that he lefte
Of Agag that he ne berefte
The life, he shall nought only deie
Him self, but fro his Regalie
He shall be put for evermo,
Nought he but eke his heire also,
That it shall never come ayein.

"Thus might thou se the sothé
plein,

That of to moch and of to lite
Upon the princes stant the wite.²
But ever it was a Kingés right
To do the dedés of a knight.
For in the hondés of a King
The dethe and life is all o thing
After the lawés of justíce;
To sleen, it is a dedly vice
But if a man the deth deserve.
And if a king the life preserve
Of him which oughté for to deie,
He sueth nought thensamplarie,
Which in the bible is evident,
How David in his testament,
Whan he no lenger mighté live,
Unto his sone in charge hath yive,
That he Joáb shall sleen algate.
And whan David was gone his gate,
The yongé wisé Salomone

¹ Behesté, promise.

² Wite, blame.

His faders hesté did anone
And slew Joáb in such a wise,
That they that herden the júise
Ever after dradden him the more.
And God was eke well paid therfore
That he so wolde his herté ply
The lawés for to justify.
And yet he kepté forth withall
Pité, so as a princé shall,
That he no tiranné wrought.
He found the wisdom which he
sought,

And was so rightfull nethéles
That all his life he stood in pees,
That he no dedly werrés had,
For every man his wisdom drad.
And as he was him selvé wise,
Right so the worthy men of prise
He hath of his counsél witholde,
For that is every princé holde
To make of such his retenue
Which wisé ben, and to remue
The foolés. For there is no thng,
Which may be better about a king
Than counsell, which is the sub-
staunce

Of all a kingés governaunce.

“**In Salomon** a man may se,
What thing of most necessité
Unto a worthy King belongeth,
Whan he his kingdom under-
fongeth.

God bad him chesé what he wolde
And saide him that he havé sholde
What he wold axe, as of o thing.
And he, which was a newé king.
Forth therupon his boné¹ praide
To God, and in this wisé saide :

‘O king, by whom that I shall
regne,

Yive me Wisdóme that I my regne
Forth with the people which I have
To thin honour may kepe and save.’
Whan Salomon his bone hath taxed,

The God of that which he hath
axed

Was right well paid and graunteth
sone

Nought all only that he his bone
Shall have of that, but of richesse,
Of helc, of pees, of high noblesse,
Forth with Wisdóm at his axinges,
Which stant aboveall other thinges.

“But what king woll his regné
save,

First him behoveth for to have
After the God and his beleve
Such counseil which is to beleve¹
Fullfild of trouth and rightwisnesse.
But above all in his noblesse
Betwene the reddour and pité
A king shall do suche equité
And setté the balaunce in even,
So that the highé God in heaven
And all the people of his nobley
Loenge² unto his namé say.

For most above all erthly good,
Where that a king him self is good,
It helpeth ; for in other way
If so be that a king forsway,³
Full oft er this it hath be sain,
The comun people is overlain
And hath the Kingés sin about⁴
All though the people agulténought.
Of that the King his God misserveth,
The people taketh that he de-
serveth ;

Here in this world, but ellés where
I not how it shall stondé there.
Forthy good is a king to triste
First to him self, as he ne wiste
None other help but God allone,
So shall the reule of his persone
Within him self through providence
Ben of the better consciéce.
And for to finde ensample of this

¹ *Beleve*, remain.

² *Loenge*, praise.

³ *Forsway*, become remis, not awake to his duty.

⁴ *About*, paid for, suffered for.

¹ *Bone*, boon.

A tale I rede, and soth it is.

"In a cronique it telleth thus,
The King of Romé Luciús
Within his chambre upon a night
The steward of his hous a knight
Forth with his chamberlein also
To counseil haddé bothé two,
And stoden by the chiménée
To-gider spekend allé thre.
And hapneth that the Kingés fole
Sat by the fire upon a stole,
As he that with his babel¹ plaide,
And yet he herde all that theysaide,
And therof toké they non hede.
The King hem axeth what to rede
Of such matére as cam to mouth.
And they him tolden as they couth.
Whan all was spoke of that they

ment,

The King with all his hole entent
That atté last hem axeth this,
What King men tellen that he is
Among the folk touchénd his name,
Or it be pris, or it be blame,
Right after that they herden sain.
He had hem for to telle it plein,
That they no point of soth forbere
By thilké feith that they him bere.

"The steward first upon this thing
Yaf his answére unto the King
And thoughté glose in this matére
And said, als fer as he can here,
His name is good and honouráble.
Thus was the steward favouráble,
That he the trouthé plein ne tolde.

The King than axeth, as he sholde,
The chamberlein of his avise,
And he, that was subtil and wise
And somdele thought upon his feith,
Him tolde, how all the people saith,
That if his counseil weré trewe,
They wisté thanné well and knewe,
That of him self he shuldé be
A worthy King in his degré.

¹ Babel, bauble.

And thus the counseil he accuseth
In party, and the king excuseth.

"The fool, which herde of all
the cas,

What time as Goddés willé was,
Sigh, that they saiden nought
inough,

And hem to scorné bothé lough,
And to the king he saidé tho :

'Sir king, if that it weré so
Of wisdom in thin owné mode,
That thou thy selven weré good,
Thy counseil shuldé nought be bad.'
The king therof merveilé had,
Whan that a fool so wisely spake,
And of him self found out the lacke
Within his owné consciéce.

And thus the foolés evidence,
Which was of goddés grace en-
spired,

Maketh, that good counseil was
desired.

He put away the viciús
And toke to him the vertuús.
The wrongfull lawés ben amended,
The londés good is well depended,
The people was no more opressed
And thus stood every thing re-
dressed.

For where a king is propre wise
And hath such as him selven is
Of his counseil, it may nought failé,
That every thing ne shal availe.
The Vices thanné gone away,
And every Vertu holt his wey,
Wherof the highé God is plesed
And all the londés folke is esed.
For if the comun people cry
And than a king list nought to ply
To heré what the clamour wolde,
And other wisé than he sholde
Desdaineth for to done hem grace,
It hath be seen in many place,
There hath befallé great contraire,
And that I finde of ensamplaire.

"After the deth of Salomone,
Whan thilké wisé king was gone
And Roboás in his persóne
Receivé shuldé the coróne,
The people upon a parlemént
Avised were of one assent
And all unto the king they preiden
With comun vois and thus they
saiden :

'Our legé lord, we the beseche,
Thatthou receive our humble speche
And graunt us that which reson will
Or of thy grace or of thy skill.
Thy fader, while he was alive
And mighté bothé graunt and prive,
Upon the werkés which he had
The comun people streitè lad,
Whan he the temple madé newe.
Thing which men never afore
knewe

He brought up than of his tallége,
And all was under the visége
Of werkés which he madé tho.
But now it is befallé so,
That all is made right, as he saide,
And he was riché whan he deide.
So that it is no maner nede,
If thou therof wolt taken hede,
To pilen of the people more,
Which long time hath be grevéd
sore.

And in this wise as we the say,
With tender herté we the prey,
That thou relessé thilké dette,
Which upon us thy fader sette.
And if the liké to done so,
We ben thy men for evermo
To gone and comen at thin heste.'

"The King, which herdé this
requeste,

Saith, that he woldé ben avised,
And hath therof a time assised,
And in the while as he him thought
Upon this thing counsell he sought.
And first the wisé knightés olde,

To whom that he his talé tolde,
Counseillen him in this manére,
That he with love and with glad
chere

Forgive and graunt all that is axed
Of that his fader haddé taxed.
For so he may his regne acheve
With thing which shall hem litel
greve.

"The King hem herd and over
passeth
And with these other his wit com-
pásseth

That yongé were and nothing wise.
And they these oldé men despise
And saiden : 'Sir, it shall be shame
For ever unto thy worthy name,
If thou ne kepé nought thy right,
While thou art in thy yongé might,
Which that thin oldé fader gat.

But say unto the people plat,
That while thou livest in thy londe,
The lesté finger of thin honde
It shall be stronger over all,
Than was thy faders body all.
And thus also shall be thy tale,—
If he hem smote with roddés smale,
With scorpions thou shalt hem
smite.

And where thy fader toke a lite,
Thou thenkest také nochel more,
Thusshaltthoumakehemdredésore
The greté hert of thy coráge,
So for to holde hem in servage.'

"This yongé king him hath con-
formed

To done as he was last enformed,
Which was to him his undoing.
For whan it camé to the speking,
He hath the yongé counsell holde,
That he the samé wordés tolde
Of all the people in audiéce.
And whan they herden the sentéce
Of his malíce and the manáce,
Anone to-foré his owné face

They have him oultrely refused
 And with full great reprove accused.
 So they beginné for to rave,
 That he was faine him self to save.
 For as the wildé wodé rage
 Of windés maketh the see salvage
 And that was calm bringth into
 wawe,

So for defalt and grace of lawe,
 The people is steréd all at ones
 And forth they gone out of his wones,
 So that of the lignáges twelve,
 Two tribus onely by hem selve
 With him abiden and no mo.
 So weré they for evermo
 Of no retorne without espeire
 Departed fro the rightfull heire
 Of Israel with comun vois.
 A king upon her owné chois
 Among hem self anone they make
 And have her yongé lord forsake.
 A pouer knight Jeróboás
 They toke and lefté Roboás,
 Which rightfull heire was by de-
 scent.

Lo, thus the yongé causé went,
 For that the counseil was nought
 good

The regné fro the rightfull blood
 Ever afterward devided was.
 So may it proven by this cas,
 That yong counsél, which is to
 warme,

Or men beware, doth ofté harme.
 Old agé for the counseil serveth,
 And lusty youth his thank deserveth
 Upon the travail which he doth.
 And bothé for to say a soth
 By sondry causé for to have,
 If that he will his regné save,
 A king behoveth every day,
 That one can and that other may
 Be so the kinge hem bothé reule,
 Or ellés all goth out of reule.

“And upon this matere also

A question betwene the two
 Thus writen in a boke I fonde,
 Where¹ it be better for the londe
 A King him selvé to be wise
 And so to bere his owné prise,
 And that his counseil be nought
 good;

Or otherwise if it so stood,
 A King if he be vicióus
 And his counsél be vertuóus:
 It is answerde in suche a wise,
 That better it is that they be wise,
 By whom that the counsél shall
 gone.

For they be many, and he is one,
 And rather shall an oné man
 With fals counsél, for ought he can,
 From his wisdóme be made to fall,
 Than he aloné shuld hem all
 Fro vices into vertue change,
 For that is well the moré straunge.
 Forthý the lond may well be glad,
 Whose king with good counsél is
 lad,

Which set him unto rightwisnesse,
 So that his highé worthinesse
 Betwene the reddour and pité
 Doth mercy forth with equité.
 A king is holden over all
 To pité, but in speciall
 To hem, where he is most beholde,
 They shulde his pité most beholde
 That ben the leges of the londe.²
 For they ben ever under his honde
 After the goddés ordenaunce
 To stonde upon his governaunce.

Of the *emperour* Anthonius
 I find, how that he saidé thus:
 ‘Lever him weré for to save
 One of his legés than to have
 Of enemies a thousand dede.’
 And thus he lernéd as I rede
 Of Cipio, which haddé be
 Consul of Rome. And thus to se

¹ Where, whether.

Divers ensamples how they stonde,
A King, which hath the charge on
honde

The comun people to gouverne,
If that he woll, he may well lerne
Is none so good to the plesaunce
Of God, as is good governaunce.
And every governaunce is due
To pité; thus I may argue
That pité is the foundement
Of every Kinges regiment.
If it be medled with justice,
They two remeven allé Vice
And ben of Vertue most vailable
To make a Kingés regné stable.

“Lo, thus the fouré points to-fore
In Governauce as they ben bore
Of Trouthé first and of Largesse,
Of Pité forth with Rightwinesse,
I have hem tolde. And over this
• The fifté point, so as it is
Set of the reule of Policý,
Wherof a king shall modesty
The fleshly lustés of natúre,
Now thenke I telle of such mesure,
That bothé kindé shall be served
And eke the lawe of God observed.

“It sit a man by wey of kinde
To lové, but it is nought kinde
A man for love his wit to lese.
For if the month of Juil shall frese
And that December shall be hote,
Thé yere mistorneth wel I wote.
To seen a man from his estate
Through his sotý effeminate
And levé that a man shall do,
It is as hose above the sho
To man, which ought nought to be
used.

But yet the world hath oft accused
Full greté princes of this dede,
How they for love hem self mislede,
Wherof manhodé stood behinde
Of olde ensamples as men finde.

These olde gestes tellen thus,

That whilom Sardanapallus,
Which held all hole in his empire
The greté kingdom of Assfre,
Was through the slouth of his
coráge

Fall into thilké fry rage
Of lové which the men assotéth,
Wherof him self he so rióteth,
And wax so ferforth womanissh,
That ayein kinde, as if a fissh
Abidé wold upon the londe,
In women suche a luste he fonde,
That he dwelt ever in chambre still
And only wrought after the will
Of women, so as he was bede,
They taughten him a lace to braide
And weve a purs and to enfile
A perle. And fell that ilké while,
One Arbactus the prince of Mede
Sigh how this king in womanhede
Was fallé fro chiválerié,
And gate himhelpe and compaignie
And wroughté so that atté last
This king out of his regne he cast,
Which was undone for ever mo.
And yet men speken of him so,
That it is shamé for to here;
Fortlý to love is in manere,
For where a prince his lustés sueth,
That he the werré nought pursueth,
Whan it is timé to bene armed,
His contré stant full ofté harmed,
Whan thenemiés ben woxé bolde,
That they defencé none beholde.
Full many a londe hath so be lore,
As men may rede oft time afore
Of hem that so her eses soughten,
Which after they full dere abouten.

To mochel ese is nothing worth,
For that set every vicé forth
• And every vertue put a backe,
Wherof pris torneth into lacke,
As in cronique I may reherse,
Which telleth, how the king of Perse
That Cyrus high, a werré hadde

Ayein the people which he dradde
 Of a contré which Lidos hight,
 But yet for ought that he do might
 As in bataile upon the werre,
 He had of hem alway the werre,¹
 And whan he sigh and wist it wele,
 That he by strengthé wan no dele,
 Than atté last he cast a wile
 This worthy people to beguile
 And toke with hem a feigné pees,
 Which shuldé lasten endelees,
 So as he saide in wordés wise,
 But he thought all in other wise.
 For it betid upon the cas
 Whan that this people in resté was
 They token eses many folde,
 And worldes ese as it is tolde
 By way of kinde is the norice
 Of every lust which toucheth vice.
 Thus whan they were in lustés falle,
 The werrés ben forgotten alle.
 Was none which woldé the worship
 Of armés, but in idelship
 They putten besinesse away
 And token hem to daunce and play,
 And every man doth what him liste.
 But whan the king of Perse it wiste,
 That they unto folie entenden,
 With his powér, whan they lest
 wenden,

More sodeinly than doth the thunder
 Hecame forever and put hem under.
 And thus hath lecherie lore
 The londé which had be to-fore
 The best of hem that weré tho.

"And in the bible I finde also
 A talé lich unto this thing,
 How Amalech the païen king,
 Whan that he mighté by no wey
 Defend his londe and put away
 The worthy people of Israel,
 This Sarazin, as it befell,
 Through the counseil of Balaäm
 A rout of fairé women nam,

¹ *The werre*, the worse.

That lusty were and yonge of age,
 And bad hem gon to the lignage
 Of these Hebrews. And forth they
 went

With eyen grey and browés bent
 And well arraiéd everychone.
 And whan they comé were anone
 Among thebrews, was none in sight
 But cacché who that cacché might,
 And grace anone began to faile,
 That whan they comen to bataile,
 Than afterward in sory plite
 They weré take and discomfite,
 So that within a litel throwe,
 The might of hem was overthrowe,
 That whilom weré wont to stonde,
 Till Phineës the cause on honde
 Hath také this vengeaúncé last.
 But than it ceséd atté last.
 For God was paid of that he dede,
 For where he found upon a stede
 A couple which misferdé so
 Throughout he smote hem bothé two
 And let hem ligge in mennés eye,
 Wherof all other which hem sigh
 Ensampléd hem upon the dede
 And praiden unto the godhede
 Her oldé sinnés to amende.
 And he which wold his mercy sende
 Restoréd hem to newé grace,
 Thus may it shewe in sondry place
 Of chasteté how the clennesse
 Accordeth to the worthinesse
 Of men of armés over all.
 But most of all in speciáll
 This vertue to a King belongeth,
 For upon his fortune it hongeth
 Of that his lond shall spede or spill.
 Forthý but if a King his will
 Fro lustés of his flessch restreigne,
 Ayein him self he maketh a treigne,
 Into the whiche if that he slide,
 Him weré better go beside.
 For every man may understonde
 How for a timé that it stonde,

It is a sory lust to like,
Whose endé maketh a man to sike¹
And torneth joiés into sorwe.
The brighté sonnè by the morwe²
Beshineth nought the derké night;
The lusty youth of mannés might,
In agé but it stondé wele,
Mistorneth all the lasté whele.

“That every worthy prince is
holde

Within him self him self beholde
To se the state of his persône
And thenke, how there be joiés none
Upon this erthé made to last,
And how the flessché shall at last
The lustés of his life forsake,
Him ought a great ensample take
Of Salomon, Ecclesiaste,
The fame of whom shall ever laste,
That he the mighty God forsokc,
• Ayein the lawé whan he toke
His wivés and his concubines,
Of hem that weré Sarazines,
For which he did ydolatrie.
For this I rede of his sotý,
She of Sidoiné so him ladde,
That he knelénd his armés spradde
To Astrathen with great humblésse,
Which of herlond was the goddesse.
And she that was of Moabite
So ferforth made him to delite
Throug lust, which al his wit
devoureth,
That he Chamos her god honouéreth.
An other Amonite also
With love him hath assoted so,
Her god Moloch that with encense
He sacreth and doth reverence
In such a wise as she him bad.
Thus was the wisest overlad
With blindé lustés which he sought.
But he it afterward abought.

“For Achías Selonités,

Which was prophét, er his decés,
While he was in his lustés alle,
Betokeneth what shall after falle.
For on a day, whan that he mette
Jeróboam, the knight he grette¹
And bad him that he shulde abide
To heré what him shall betide.
And forth withall Achias cast
His mantel of, and al so fast
He kut it into pieces twelve,
Wherof two parts toward him selve
He kept, and all the remenaunt,
As God hath set his covenaut,
He toke unto Jeróboás
Of Nabal which the soné was
And of the kingés court a knight.
And said him, ‘Such is Goddé’s
might,

As thou hast sene departed² here
My mantel, right in such manere
After the deth of Salomon
God hath ordeinéed therupon,
This regné than he shall devide,
Which timé thou shalt eke abide,
And upon that división
The regne, as in proporción
As thou hast of my mantel take,
‘Thou shalt receive I undertake.’
O, which a sinné violent,
Wherof so wise a king was shent,
That he vengeaúnce of his persône
Was nought inough to take alone,
But afterward, whan he was passed,
It hath his heritagé lassed,
As I more openly to-fore
The talé tolde; and thus therfore
The philosóphre upon this thing
Writ and counsélled to a king,
That he the forfete of luxure
Shall tempre and reule of such
mesure

Which be to kindé suffisaúnt
And eke to reson accordaúnt,
So that the lustés ignoraúnce

¹ *Sike*, sigh.

² The bright morning sun.

¹ *Grette*, greeted.

² *Departed*, divided.

Be cause of no misgovernaunce,
Through which that he be over-
throwe

As he that woll no reson knowe.

“For of Antónie thus I rede,
Which of Sevérus was the sone,
That he his life of comun wone
Yaf holy unto thilké vice,
And ofté time he was so nice,
Wherof natúre her hath compleigned
Unto the God, which hath des-
deigned

The werkés which Antónie wrought
Of lust which he full sore abought;
For God his forfete hath so wroke,
That in cronfque it is yet spoke.
But for to také rémembraunce
Of speciáll misgovernaunce
Through covetise and injustice
Forth with the remenaunt of vice,
I finde a tale, as thou shalt here,
Which is thensample of this matere.

So as these olde gestés sain,
The proudé tírannísh Romaín
Tarquinius, which was than king
And wrought maný a wrongful
thing,

Of sonés he had many one,
Among the which Arrons was one
Lich to his fader in maneres,
So that within a fewé yeres
With treson and with tiranny
They wonne of londe a gréat partý
And token hede of no justice,
Which dúe was to her office
Upon the reule of governaunce.
But al that ever was plesaunce
Unto the flessshés lust they toke,
And fell so, that they undertoke
A werré, which was nought acheved,
But often time it had hem greved,
Ayein a fólk which thanné hight
The Gabiens, and all by night
Thus Arrons whan he was at home
In Rome a privé place he nome

Within a chambre and bete him
selve

And made him woundés ten or
twelve

Upon the backe, as it was sene,
And so forth with his hurtés grene
In all the hasté that he may
He rode and cam that other day
Unto Gabië the citee

And in he went. And whan that he
Was knowe, anone the gatés shette,
The lordés all upon him sette
With drawé swerdés upon honde.
And Arrons wolde hem nought
withstonde,

And saide: ‘I am here at your
wille,

As lese it is that ye me spille,
As if min owné fader dede.’
And forth within the samé stede
He praide hem that they woldé se;
And shewéd hem in what degré
His fader and his brethren bothe,
Which as he saidé weren wrothe,
Him haddé beten and reviled
And out of Rome for ever exiled.
And thus he made hem to beleve
And saide, if that he might acheve
His purpos, it shall well be yolde
Be so that they him helpé wolde.
Whan that the lordés haddé sene,
How wofully he was besene,
They toké pité of his greve.

But yet it was hem wonder leve
That Rome him had exilé so.
The Gabiens by conseil tho
Upon the goddés inade him swere,
That he to hem shall trouthé bere
And strengthen hem with all his
might.

And they also him hath behight
To helpé him in his quaréle.
They shopé thanné for his hele
That he was bathéd and anoint
Till that he was in lústy point,

And what he woldé than he had,
That he all hole the cite lad
Right as he wolde him self devise.
And than he thought him in what
wise

He might his tirannié shewe,
And to his counseil toke a shrewe¹
Whom to his fader forth he sent.
In his messáge and he tho went
And praied his fader for to say
By his avise and finde a wey
How they the cité mighten winne
While that he stood so well therinne.
And whan the messagér was come
To Rome and hath in counseil nome
The king, it fell perchauncé so
That they were in a gardin tho,
This messenger forth with the king.
And whan he haddé told the thing
In what manéré that it stode,
And that Tarquínus understode
By the messáge how that it ferde,
Anone he toke in honde a yerde,
And in the gardin as they gone
The lilie croppes one and one
Where that they weren sprongen
out

He smote of as they stood about,
And said unto the messagère :
'Lo, this thing which I do now here
Shall be in stede of thin answére.
And in this wise as I me bere,
Thou shalte unto my soné telle.'
And he no lenger woldé dwelle,
But toke his leve and goth withall
Unto his lorde and tolde him all,
How that his fader haddé do.
Whan Arrons herde him tellé so,
Anone he wisté what it ment,
And therto sette all his entent
Till he through fraude and trechery
The princes hevedés of Gabý
Hath smiten of and all was wonne.
His fader cam to-fore the sonne

¹ *Shrewe*, plotter of evil.

Into the town with the Romains
And toke and slew the citezeins
Withouté reson or pité,
That he ne spareth no degré.
And for the spede of this conquest
He let do make a riché fest
With a solempné sacrifice
In Phebus temple, and in this wise,
Whan the Romains assembled were
In presence of hem allé there,
Upon thalter whan all was dight
And that the firés were alight,
From under thalter sodeinly
An hidous serpent openly
Cam out and hath devouréd all
The sacrifice, and eke withall
The firés quent, and forth anone,
So as he cam so is he gone
Into the depé ground aycin.
And every man began to sain,
'Ha lord, what may this signify?'
And therupon they pray and cry
To Phebus, that they mighten knowe
The cause. And he the samé throwe
With gastly vois, that all it herde,
The Romains in this wise answérde
And said, how for the wickednesse
Of pride and of unrightwisnesse
That Tarquin and his sone hath do
The sacrifice is wasted so,
Which mighté nought ben accept-
áble

Upon such sinne abhomináble.
And over that yet he hem wisseth
And saith, that which of hem first
kisseth
His moder, he shall také wreche
Upon the wronge. And of that
speche
They ben within her hertés glade,
Though they outwárd no semblaunt
made.
There was a knight, which Brutús
hight,
And he with all the haste he might

To groundé fell and there he kiste,
 But none of hem the causé wiste,
 But wenden that he haddé sporned
 Perchaunce and so was overtorned.
 But Brutus all an other ment,
 For he knew well in his entent,
 How therthe of every mannés kinde
 Is moder. But they weren blinde
 And sighen nought so fer as he.
 But whan they leften the citee
 And comen home to Rome ayein,
 Than everyman, which was Romain
 And moder hath, to her he bende
 And kist, and ech of hem thus wende
 To be the first upon the chaunce
 Of Tarquin for to do vengeaunce,
 So as they herden Phebus sain.
 But every time hath his certain,
 So must it nedés than abide,
 Till afterward upon a tide
 Tarquinius made unskilfully
 A werré, which was fasté by,
 Ayein a town with wallés stronge,
 Which Ardeá was clepéd longe,
 And cast a siegé there about
 That there may no man passen out.
 So it befell upon a night
 Arrons, which had his souper dight,
 A parte of the chiválerie
 With him to suppe in compaignie
 Hath bedc. And whan they comen
 were

And setten at the suppe there,
 Among her other wordés glade
 Arrons a great spekingé made,—
 Who haddé tho the besté wife
 Of Rome? And thus began a strife,
 For Arrons saith he hath the best.
 So janglen they withouten reste,
 Till atté last one Collatine,
 A worthy knight and was cousine
 To Arrons, said him in this wise :
 'It is,' quod he, 'of none emprise
 To speke a word, but of the dede
 Wherof it is to taken hede.

Anone forthý this same tide
 Lepe on thy hors and let us ride,
 So may we knowé bothé two
 Unwarely what our wivés do,
 And that shall be a trewe assay.'

" This Arrons saith nought onés
 nay.

On horséback anone they lepte
 In such manere and nothing slepte
 Ridéndé forth till that they come
 All privelich withinné Rome,
 In strangé place and down they light
 And take a chambre out of sight.
 They be disguised for a throwe,
 So that no life ¹ hem shuldé knowc.
 And to the paleis first they sought
 To se what thing these ladies
 wrought,

Of whiche Arrons had made his
 vaunt.

And they her sigh of glad semblaunt
 All full of merthés and of bordes.²
 But among all her other wordes
 She spakenought of her husébonde.
 And whan they had all understonde
 Of thilké placé what hem list,
 They gone hem forth that nene it
 wist

Besidé thilké gate of bras,
 Collíceá which clepéd was,
 Where Collatin hath his dwelling.
 There founden they at home sitting
 Lucrece his wife all environed
 With women which were abandóned
 To werche, and she wrought eke
 withall

And bad hem haste and said : ' It
 shall'

Be for min husébondes were,
 Which with his swerd and with his
 spere

Lith at siúge in great disese,
 And if it shulde him nought displese,
 Now woldé God, I had him here.

¹ No life, no body.

² Bordes, jests.

For certes till that I may here
Some good tidíng of his estate,
My herte is ever upon debate.
For so as allé men witnesse,
He is of such an hardiesse,
That he can nought him selvés spare,
And that is all my mosté care
Whan they the wallés shulde assaile.
But if my wissches might availé,
I wolde it were a groundles pit
Be so the siegé were unknit,
And I my huschondé sigh.¹
With that the water in her eye
Arose, that she ne might it stoppe,
And as men sene the dew bedroppe
The levés and the flourés eke,
Right so upon her whité cheke
The wofull salté terés felle.

“Whan Collatin hath herde her
telle

The mcníng of her trewé herte,
Anone with that to her he sterte
And saidé : ‘Lo, my goodé dere,
Now is he comé to you here
That ye most ^{loven} as ye sain.
And she with goodly chere ayein
Beclipt him in her armés smale.
And the colóur which erst was pale
To beauté thanné was restored
So that it mighté nought be mored.
The kingés soné, which was nigh,
And of this lady herde and sigh
The thingés as they ben befallé,
The reson of his wittés alle
Hath lost, for love upon his parte
Cam than and of his fry darte
With such a wounde him hath
through smite,
That he must nedés fele and wite
Of thilké blindé malady,
To which no cure of surgery
Can helpé. But yet nethéles
At thilké time he helde his pees
That he no countenauncé made
But openly with wordés glade,

So as he couthe in his manere,
He spake and madé frendely chere
Till it was timé for to go.
And Collatin with him also
His levé toke, so that by night,
With all the hasté that they might,
They riden to the siege ayein.
But Arrons was so wo besein
With thoughtés which upon him
runne

That he all by the brodé sunne
To beddé goth nought for to reste,
But for to thenke upon the beste
And the fairésté forth with alle,
That ever he sigh or ever shalle,
So as him thought in his coráge
Where he portreieþ her ymáge.
First the, fetúrés of her face,
In which natúre had allé grace
Of womanly beauté beset
So that it mighté nought be bet.
And how her yelwe hair was tressed
And her attire so wel adressed.
And how she spake, and how she
wrought,
And how she wepte, and how she
thought,
That he foryeten hath no dele
But all it liketh him so wele
That in the wordé nor in dede
He lackéd nought of womanhede.

“And thus this tirannísshé knight
Was soupled, but nought half
aright,
For he none other hedé toke,
But that he might by sommé croke,
All though it were ayein her wille,
The lustés of his flessch fulfille,
Which lové was nought resonáble ;
For wher honour is remeváble,
It oughté well to ben avised.
But he, which hath his lust assised
With melléd¹ love and tirannie,
Hath found upon his trecherie

¹ *Melléd*, mingled.

A wey the which he thenketh to
 holde,
 And saith, 'Fortúne unto the bolde
 Is favorable for to helpe.'
 And thus within him self to yelpé,
 As he which was a wilde man
 Upon his treson he began.
 And up he sterte, and forth he wene
 On horsébacke, but his entente
 There knew no wight, and thus he
 name
 The nexté waié, till he came
 Unto Collaceá the gate
 Of Rome, and it was somdele late
 Right even upon the sonnè sette.
 And he which haddé shape his nette
 Her innocéncé to betrappe,
 And as it shuldé tho mishappe,
 As privelych as ever he might
 He rode and of his hors alight
 To-foré Collatinés inn
 And all frendlich goth him in,
 As he that was counsín of house.
 And she which is the goodé spouse,
 Lucrecé, whan that she him sigh,
 With goodly cheré drewe him nigh
 As she which all honoúr supposeth
 And him so as she dare opposeth
 How it stood of her husébonde.
 And he tho did her understonde
 With talés feigné in this wise
 Right as he wolde him self devise
 Wherof he might her herté glade,
 That she the better cheré made.
 Whan she the gladdé wordés herde
 How that her housébondé ferde.
 And thus the trouthé was deceived
 With slie tresón which was received
 To hiré which mente allé good.
 For as the festés thanné stood,
 His souper was right wel arraied,
 But yet he hath no word assaied
 To speke of love in no degré.
 But with covért subtilité
 His frendly speches he affaiteth,

And, as the tigre, his time awaiteth
 In hopé for to cacche his pray.

"Whan that the bordés were away
 And they have soupéd in the halle,
 He saith that slepe is on him falle,
 And praith, he moté go to bedde.
 And she with allé hasté spedde
 So as her thought it was to done,
 That every thing was redy sone.
 She brought him to his chambre tho
 And toke her leve, and forth is go
 Into her owné chambre by.
 And she that wendé certainly
 Have had a frend then had a fo,
 Wherof fell after mochel wo.

"This tiraunt though he lié softe
 Out of his bedde aros full ofte
 And goth about and laid his ere
 To herken till that allé were
 To beddé gone and slepten faste.
 And than upon him self he caste
 A mantel and his swerde all naked
 He toke in honde, and she unwaked
 A beddé lay. But what she mette,¹
 God wot, for he the dore unshette
 So prively that none it herde,
 The softé pas and forth he ferde
 Into the bed where that she slepte,
 All sodeinly and in he crepte.
 And her in bothe his armés toke.
 With that this worthy wife awoke,
 Which through tendrésse of woman-
 hed

Her vois hath lost for puré drede,
 That o word speké she ne dare.
 And eke he bad her to beware,
 For if she madé noise or cry,
 He said, his swerd lay fasté by
 To sleen her and her folke about.
 And thus he brought her herté in
 doubt,
 That lich a lamb whan it is sesed
 In wolvés mouth, so was disesed
 Lucrecé, who lay dede oppressed.

¹ Mette, dreamed.

And he, which all him hadde ad-
ressed

To lust, toke thanné what him liste
And goth his wey, that none it wiste,
Into his owné chambre ayein
And clepéd up his chamberlein
To horsé lept and forth he rode.
And she, which in her bed abode,
Whan that she wist he was agone,
She clepéd after light anone
And up aros long er the day
And cast away her fressh array,
Asshe which hath the world forsake,
And toke upon the clothés blacke.
And ever upon continuing,
Right as men se a wellé spring,
With eyen full of wefull teres
Her hair hangénd about her cres
She wepte, and no man wisté why.
But yet among full pitously
She praiéd that they nolden drecche¹

• Her husebondé for to fecche
Forthwith her fader eke also.
Thus be they comen bothé two,
And Brutus cam with Collatine,
Which to Lucrecé was cousine,
And in they wenten allé thre
To chambre, where they nighté se
The wofullest upon this molde,
Which wepte as she to water sholde.
The chambre dore anone was stoke,²
Er they have ought unto her spoke.
They sigh her clothés all disguised,
And how she hath her self despised
Her haire hangénd unkennt about.
But nethéles she gan to lout
And knele unto her husebonde.
And he, which fain wold understonde
The causé why she faréd so,
With softé wordes axéd tho:
'What may you be,³ my godé swete?'
And she, which thought her self
unmete

And the lest worth of women alle,
Her woful cheré let down falle
For shame and couthe unnethés¹
loke,

And they therof good hedé toke
And praiden her in allé way,
That she ne sparé for to say
Unto her frendés what her eileth,
Why she so sore her self bewaileth,
And what the sothé woldé mene.
And she, which hath her sorwe grene,
Her wo to tellé thanne assaieth,
But tendre shame her word delaith,
That sondry timés as she mente
To speke upon the point she stente.
And they her beden ever in one
To tellé forth, and there upon,
Whan that she sigh she musté nede,
Her tale betwené shame and drede
She toldé, nought withouté peine.
And he, which wolde her wo re-
streigne,

Her husebond, a sory man,
Comfórteth her all that he can
And swore, and eke her fader both,
That they with hiré be nought wroth
Of that is do ayein her wille,
And praiédén her to be stille,
For they to her have all foryive.
But she, which thoughté nought to
live,

Of hem woll no foryivénesse
And said, of thilké wickednesse,
Which was to hiré body wrought,
All were it so she might it nought,
Never afterward the world né shall
Proven her, and forthwithall,
Er any man therof be ware,
A naked swerd, the which she bare
Within her mantel prively,
Betwene her hondés sodeinly
She toke, and through her hert it
throng,

And fell to ground, and ever among,

¹ *Drecche*, delay.

² *Stoke*, barred.

³ What may be to you? How is it with you?

¹ *Unnethés*, hardly (not easily).

Whan that she fell, so as she might,
 Her clothés with her hond sheright,
 That no man downward fro the knee
 Shuld any thinge of her then se.
 Thus lay this wife honestely,
 All though she died wofully.
 Tho was no sorwe for to seke,
 Her husbonde and her fader eke
 A swoune upon the body felle.
 There may no mannés tungé telle,
 In which anguishé that they were.
 But Brutus, which was with hem
 there,

Toward him self his herté kept
 And to Lucrece anone he lept,
 The bloody swerde and pulleth out
 And swore the goddés al about
 That he therof shall do vengeance.
 And she tho made a countenaunce
 Her dedly eye and atté laste
 In thonking as it were up cast,
 And so behelde him in the wise
 While she to loké may suffise.
 And Brutus with a manly herte
 Her husébonde hath made up sterte
 Forth with her fader eke also
 In allé haste and said hem tho,
 That they anone withouté lette
 A beré for the body fette.
 Lucrece and therupon bledénd
 He laide and so forth out criénd
 He goth unto the market place
 Of Rome. And in a litel space
 Through cry the cité was assembled,
 And every mannés herté trembled
 Whan they the soth herde of the cas.
 And thereupon the counseil was
 Take of the great and of the smale.
 And Brutus tolde hem all the tale.
 And thus cam into remembraunce
 Of sinné the continuaunce
 Which Arrons haddé do to-fore,
 And eke long time er he was bore
 Of that his fader haddé do,
 The wrong came into placé tho,

So that the comun clamour tolde
 The newé shame of sinnés olde.
 And all the town began to cry :

‘Awey, awey the tiranny
 Of lechery and covetise !’
 And atté last in such a wise
 The fader in the samé while
 Forth with the soné they exile
 And taken better governaunce.

“But yet an other remembraunce
 That rightwisesse and lechery
 Accorden nought in compaigny
 With him that hath the lawe on
 honde,

That may a man well understonde.
 As by a talé thou shalt wite
 Of olde ensample as it is write.

“**At Rome** whan that Appius,
 Whose other name was Claudius,
 Was governour of the citee,
 There fell a wonder thing to se
 Touchend a gentil maide, as thus,
 Whom Livius Virginius
 Begeten had upon his wife.
 Men saiden, that se faire a life
 As she was nought in all the town.
 This famé, which goth up and
 down,

To Claudius came in his ere,
 Wherof his thought anone was there,
 But she stood upon mariáge.
 A worthy knight of great lignáge,
 Iliciús which thanné hight,
 Accorded in her faders sight
 Was that he shulde his daughter
 wedde.

But er the cause were fully spedde,
 Her fader, which in Romanie
 The leding of the chivalrie
 In governaunce hath undertake,
 Upon a werré which was take,
 Goth out with all the strength he
 hadde

Of men of armés which he ladde.
 So was the mariáge left

And stood upon accord till eft.

"The King, which herdé telle of this,

How that this maide ordeined is
To mariagé, thought another,
And haddé thilké time a brother,
Which Marchus Claudius was hote,
And was a man of such riote
Right as the King him selvé was;
They two to-gider upon this cas
In counseil founden out the wey,
That Marchus Claudius shall sey
How she by wey of covenant
To his servíce apurtenaunt
Was hole, and to none other man.
And there upon he saith he can
In every point witnessé take,
So that she shall it nought forsake.¹
Whan that they hadden shapé so
After the lawé which was tho,
While that her fader was absént,
She was somonéd and assént²
To come in presence of the King,
And stood in answeere of this thing.
Her frendés wisten allé wele
That it was falschede every dele,
And comen to the Kinge and saiden
Upon the comun lawe and praiden
So as this noble worthy knight,
Her fader, for the comun right
In thilké time, as was befallé,
Lay for the profit of hem alle
Upon the wildé feldés armed,
That he ne shuldé nought ben
harmed

Ne shaméd while that he were out.
And thus they praiden all about.

"For all the clamour that he herde
The King upon his lust answerde
And yaf hem only daiés two
Of respit. For he wendé tho,
That in so short a time appere
Her fader might in no manere.
But as therof he was deceived.

For Livius had all conceived
The purpos of the King to-fore,
So that to Rome ayein therfore
In allé hast he came ridénd
And left upon the feld liggend
His host till that he came ayein.
And thus this worthy capitain
Appereth redy at his day,
Where all that ever reson may
By lawe in audience he doth,
So that his doughter upon soth
Of that Marchús her had accused
He hath to-fore the Court excused.

"The King, which sigh his purpos faile,
And that no sleighté might availé,
Incombred of his lustés blinde
The lawé torneth out of kinde,
And halfe in wrath as though it were
In presence of hem allé there
Deceivéd of concúpiscence
Yaf for his brother the sentéce
And bad him that he shuldé sese
This maide and make him well at
ese.

But all within his own entent
He wist how that the causé went,
Of that his brother hath the wite
He was him selven for to wite.¹
But thus this maiden haddé wronge
Which was upon the King alonge,
But ayein him was none apele,
And that the fader wisté welc.
Wherof upon the tyranníe,
That for the lust of lecherie
His doughter shuldé be deceived,
And that Ilicius was weived
Untruly fro the mariagé,
Right as a leon in his rage,
Which of no dredé set accompt
And not what pité shulde amount,
A naked swerde he pulled out,
The which amongés all the rout

¹ Forsake, deny.

² Assént, sent for.

¹ Of that for which his brother had the blame he was himself to be held guilty.

He thrusté through his daughters
side,

And all aloudé thus he cride :

'Lo, take her there thou wrongfull
king,

For me is lever upon this thing
To be the fader of a maide,
Though she be dede, than if men
saide

That in her life she weré shamed
And I therof were evil named.'

Tho bad the king men shulde areste
His body, but of thilké heste
Like to the chacéd wildé bore
The houndés whan he feleth sore
To throweth and goth forth his wey,
In such a wisé for to sey
This worthy knight with swerd in
honde

His weímade, and they him wonde,¹
That none of hem his strokés kepte,
And thus upon his hors he lepte
And with his swerd droppénd of
blood,

The which within his daughter stood,
He cam theas the power was
Of Rome and tolde hem all the cas
And said hem, that they mighten lere
Upon the wronge of this matere,
That better it weré to redresse
At home the great unrightwinesse,
Than for to werre in straungé place
And lese at home her owné grace.
For thus stant every mannés life
In jeopartié for his wife
And for his daughter if they be
Passénd an other of beauté.
Of this merveilé which they sigh
So apparaúnt to-fore her eye,
Of that the king him hath misbore,
Her othés they have allé swore
That they woll stondé by the right.
And thus of one accorde upright
To Rome at onés home ayein

¹ Wonde, fear.

They torne and shortly for to sain
This tiranné cam to mouth,
And every man saith what he couth,
So that the privé trechery,
Which set was upon lechery,
Cam openly to mannés ere,
And that brought in the comun fere,
That every man the perill dradde
Of him that so hem overladdé.
For they, or that¹ it worsé falle,
Through comun counseil of hem alle
They have her wrongful King de-
posed,

And hem in whom it was supposed
The counseil stood of his leding,
By lawe unto the dome they bring,
Where they receiven the penaúnce
That longeth to such governaúnce.
And thus thunchasté was chastised;
Wherof they mighten ben avised
That sholden afterward govérne,
And by this evidencé lerne
How it is good a Kinge eschue
The lust of vice and vertue sue.

To make an ende in this partie,
Which toucheth to the policie
Of chasteté in speciáll,
As for conclusión finall
That every lust is to eschue
By great ensample I may argue,
Howe in Ragés a town of Mede
There was a maide, and as I rede,
Sarra she hight, and Raguél
Her fader was. And so befell
Of body bothe and of visage
Was none so faire of the lignage
To seche among hem all, as she,
Wherof the riche of the citee
Of lusty folk, that couthen love,
Assoted were upon her love
And axén hiré for to wedde.
One was which atté lasté spedde,
But that was moré for líking
To have his lust than for wedding,

¹ Or that, before.

As he within his herté caste,
Whiche him repenteth atté laste.
For so it fell the firsté night,
That whan he was to beddé dight
As he which no thing God be-
secheth,

But all only his lustés secheth,
Asmod, which was a fend of helle
And serveth as the bokés telle
To tempte a man in such a wise,
Was redy there, and þilke emprise
Whiche he hath set upon delite
He vengeth than in such a plite
That he his neck hath writh atwo.
This yongé wife was sory tho,
Which wisté nothing what it ment.
And nethéless yet thus it went
Nought only for this firsté man,
But after right as he began,
Six other of her husebondes

• Asmod hath take into his hondes,
So that they all abedde deiede,
Whan they her hond toward her
leide,

Nought for the lawe of mariagé,
But for that ilke firy rage
In which that they the lawe excede.
For who that woldé taken hede
What after fell in this matere,
There might he well the sothe here
Whan she was wedded to Thobie,
And Raphaél in compaigny
Hath taught him how to be honést.
Asmod wan nought at thilké fest,
And yet Thoby his willé hadde,
For he his lust so godely ladde
That bothé lawe and kinde is
served,

Wherof he hath him self preserved
That he fell nought in the sentence.
Of which an open evidence
By this ensample a man may se,
That whan liking in the degre
Of mariagé may forswey,
Well ought him than in other wey

Of lust to be the better avised.
For God the lawés hath assised
As well to reson as to kinde,
But he the bestés woldé binde
Only to lawés of natúre,
But to the mannés créature
God yaf him reson forth withall
Wherof that he natúre shall
Upon the causes modify,
That he shall do no lechery,
And yet he shall his lustés have,
So ben the lawés bothé save
And every thing put out of sclaunder,
As whilom to king Alisaundre
The wisé philosóphre taught,
Whan he his firsté loré caught,
Nought only upon chasteté,
But als upon alle honesté.
Wherof a King him self may taste,
How trewe, how large, how juste,
how chaste

Him ought of reson for to be
Forth with the vertue of pité.
Through which he may great thank
deserve

Toward his God, that he preserve
Him and his people in allé welthe
Of pees, richesse, honoúr and helthe
Here in this worlde and ellés eke.

“My sone, as we to-foré speke
In shrifté, so as thou me saigest,
And forthin ese, as thou me praidest,
Thy lové throwes for to lisse,
That I the woldé telle and wisse
The forme of Aristotles lore,
I have it said, and somdele more
Of other ensamples to assaie
If I thy peinés mighte alaie
Through any thing whiche I can
say.”—

“Do wey, my fader, I you pray;
Of that ye have unto me tolde
I thonké you a thousand folde;
The talés sounen in min ere,
But yet min herte is ellés where;

I may my selvé nought restreigne
 That I nam ever in lovés peine.
 Such loré couthe I never gete,
 Which mighté maké me foryete
 O point, but if so were I slepte,
 That I my tidés ayeine kepte
 To thenke of love and of his lawe,
 That herté can I nought with-
 drawe.

Forthý, my godé fader dere,
 Leve and speke of my matere
 Touchénd of Love as we begonne,
 If that there be ought over ronne
 Or ought foryete or left behinde

Which falleth unto Lovés kinde,
 Wherof it nedeth to be shrive,
 Now axeth, so that while I live
 I might amende that is amis."—

"My godé deré soné, yis.
 Thy shrifté for to maké plein,
 There is yet moré for to sain
 Of Lové which is unavised,
 But for thou shalt be well avised
 Unto thy shrifte as it belongeth,
 A point which upon lové hongeth
 And is the laste of allé tho,
 I woll the telle, and thanné 'ho.'¹

¹ Then stop.

Book VIII.

The mighty God, which unbeginne

Stant of him self and hath begonne
All other thinges at his will,
The heven him listé to fulfill
Of alle joie, where as he
Sit enthronized in his sec
And hath his aungels him to serve,
Such as him liketh to preserve

- So that they mowe nought forswey,
But Lucifer he put away
With al the route apostazied
Of hem that ben to him allfed,
Which out of heven into helle
From aungels into fendes felle,
Where that there is no joy of light,
But more derk than any night,
The peiné shall ben endless.
And yet of fires nethéles
There is plenté, but they ben blacke,
Whereof no sighté may be take.

“Thus whan the thinges ben
befalle,

That Luciferes Court was falle
Where dedly pride hem hath convinced,

Anone forthwith it was purveied
Through him which alle thinges
may,

He made Adám the sixté day
In Paradise, and to his make
Him liketh Eve also to make
And bad hem cresce and multiply.

For of the mannes progeny
Which of the woman shall be bore,
The nombre of aungels which was
lore

Whan they out fro the blisse felle
He thoughté to restore, and fille
In heven thilké holy place
Which stood tho voide upon his
grace.

But as it is well wist and knowe,
Adám and Evé but a throwe,
So as it shuld of hem betide,
In Paradise at thilké tide
Ne dwelten, and the causé why
Write in the boke of Genesý
As who saith allé men have herde,
How Raphaél the fry swerde
In hondé toke and drove hem out
To gete her lives food about
Upon this wofull erthé here.
Metodré saith to this matere,
As he by revelaciön

It had upon avisiön
How that Adám and Eve also
Virginés comen bothé two
Into the world and were ashamed
Till that nature hath hem reclaimed
To love and taught hem thilké lore
That first they kiste and over more
They done that is to kindé due,
Whereof they hadden faire issue.
A soné was the firste of alle,
And Chaim by namé they him calle.

Abél was after the secoúnde
 And in the geste as it is founde
 Natúré so the causé ladde,
 Twodoughtersekedame Evéhadde,
 The firsté clepéd Calmaná
 Was, and that other Delborá.
 Thus was mankindé to beginne.
 Forthý that time it was no sinne
 The suster for to take the brother,
 Whan that ther was of chois non
 other.

To Chaim was Calmaná betake,
 And Delboram hath Abel take,
 In whom was geté nethéles
 Of worldés folk the first encres.
 Men sain that nedé hath no lawe,
 And so it was by thilké dawé
 And laste unto the seconde age,
 Till that the greté water rage
 Of Noë, which was said the flood,
 Theworld, which than insinnéstood,
 Hath dreint, out také livés eight.
 Tho was mankinde of litel weight.

Sem, Cam, Japhét, of thesé thre,
 That ben the sonés of Noë,
 The worlde of mannés natió
 Into multiplicatió
 Was tho restoréd new ayein
 So ferforth as these bokés sain,
 That of hem thre and her issúe
 There was so large a retenúe
 Of nations seventy and two,
 In sondry place eche one of tho
 The widé world have enhabítéd.
 But as natúre hem hath excítéd,
 They token thanné litel hede
 The brother of the susterhede
 To weddé wivés, till it cam
 Into the time of Abraham,
 Whan the thridde agé was begonne,
 The nedé tho was overonne,
 Fortherewaspeopleinoughinlonde.
 Then atté first it came to honde,
 That susterhede of mariáge
 Was tornéd into cousináge,

So that aftér the righté line
 The cousin weddeth the cousine.
 For Abraham er that he deied
 This charge upon his servaunt leied
 To him and in this wisé spake,
 That he his soné Isaäc
 Do weddé for no worldés good,
 But only to his owné blood,
 Wherof the servaunt as he badde,
 Whan he was dede, his sone hath
 ladde

To Bathuël, where he Rebecke
 Hath wedded with the whité necke.
 For she, he wisté well and sigh,
 Was to the childé cousin sigh.

“And thus as Abraham hath
 taught,

Whan Isaäc was God betaught,
 His soné Jacob did also
 And of Labán the doughters two,
 Which was his eme,¹ he toke to wife.
 And gate upon hem in his life,
 Of her firsté which highté Lie,
 Six sonés of his progenie,
 And of Rachél two sonés eke;
 The remenaunt was for to seke,
 This is to sain of fouré mo,
 Wherof he gate on Bala two
 And of Zelpha he had eke twey.
 And thesé twelve, as I the say,
 Through providence of God him
 selve

Ben said² the Patriarkes Twelve.
 Of whom as afterward befel
 The tribés twelf of Israël
 Engendred were, and ben the same,
 That of Hebréws tho hadden name,
 Which of sibred³ in aliaunce
 For ever kepten thilke usaunce
 Most comunly, till Crist was bore.
 But afterward it was forbore
 Among us that ben baptized.
 For of the lawé canonized

¹ Emé, uncle.

² Said, named.

³ Sibred, kindred.

The Pope hath bodé to the men,
That none shall wedden of his kin
Ne the secondé ne the thriddé.
But though that Holy Chirche it
bidde,

So to festreigné mariáge,
There ben yet upon lovés rage
Ful many of suché now a day,
That taken where they také may.
For lové, whiche is unbesein
Of allé reson, as men sain,
Through sotie and through niceté
Of his voluptuosité
He spareth no condición
Of kin ne yet religiôn.

My soné, thou shalt understonde,
That such delite is for to blame.
Forthý if thou hast be the same
To love in any such manere,
Tell forth therof and shrive the
here.”—

“My fader, nay, God wot the
sothe,

My faire is nought in such a bothe,
So wilde a man yet was I never,
That of my kin, or leve or lever,
Me listé love in such a wise.
And eke I not for what emprise
I shulde assote upon a nonne,
For though I had her lové wonne
It might into no prise amounte,
So therof set I none accompte.
Ye may well axe of this and that,
But sothly for to tellé plat,
In all this world there is but one,
The which my herte hath over gone.
I am toward all other fre.”—

“Full well, my soné, now I se
Thy word stant ever upon o place,
But yet therof thou hast a grace,
That thou the might so well excuse
Of lové, such as some men use,
So as I spake of now to-fore.
For all such time of love is lore,
And lich unto the bitter swete,

For though it thenke a man first
swete,

He shall well felen atté laste,
That it is soure and maynought laste.
For as a morcel envenfmed,
So hath such love his lust mistfmed,
And great ensamples many one
A man may findé therupon.

“At *Plomé* first if we begin,
There shal I find howe of this sin
An emperour was for to blame,
Gaius Caligula by name,
Which of his owné susters thre
Berefté the virginité,
And did hem out of londe exile.
But afterward within a while
God hath beraft him in his ire
His life, and eke his large empire.

“Of this sotý also I finde
Amon his suster ayein kinde,
Which highte Thamar, he forlay,
But he that lust another day
Abouté, whan that Absolon
His owné brother there upon,
Of that he had his suster shent,
Toke of that sinné vengément
And slough him with his owné honde.
And thus thunkinde unkindé fonde.

“And for to se more of this thing
The bible maketh a knoueleching,
Wherof thou might take evidence
Upon the soth expérience.
Whan Lothés wife was overgone
And shape unto the salté stonc,
As it is spoke unto this day,
By both his daughters than he lay.
And so the cause about he ladde,
That eche of hem a soné hadde,
Moab the first and the secoúnde
Amon; of which as it is founde
Cam afterward to great ences
Two nátiós. And néthelés
For that the stockés were ungood,
The braunches mighten nought ben
good.

For of the falsé Moabites
Forth with the strength of Amonites,
Of that they weren first misget,
The people of God was ofte upset
In Israél and in Judee,
As in the bible a man may se.

"Lo thus, my soné, as I the say,
Thou might thy selvé be besay
Of that thou hast of other herde,
For ever yet it hath so ferde,
Of lovés lust if so be falle
That it in other placé falle
Than it is of the lawé sette.
He, which his love hath so besette
Mote afterward repent him sore,
And every man is others lore.
Of that befell in time er this,
The present timé which now is
May ben enforméd how it stood,
And také that him thenkéth good
And levé that which is nought so.
But for to lóke of time ago,
How lust of love excedeth lawe,
It oughté for to be withdrawe.
For every man it shuldé drede
And namélich in his sibrede,
Which torneth ofte to vengeaúnce,
Wherof a tale in rémembraúnce,
Which is a long process to here,
I thenke for to tellen here.

Of a cronique in daiés gon,
The which is cleped Panteón,
In lovés cause I redé thus,
How that the great Antiochus,
Of whom that Antioché toke
His firsté name, as saith the boke,
Was coupled to a noble quene,
And had a daughter hem betwene.
But such fortuné cam to honde,
That deth, which no kind may with-
stonde

But every life it mote obey,
This worthy quené toke away.
The king, which madé mochel mone,
Tho stood as who saith all him one

Withouté wife, but nethéles
His daughter which was perélés
Of beauté dwelt about him stille.
But whan a man hath welth at wille
The flesshe is frele and falleth ofte,
And that this maidé tendre and softe
Whiche in her faders chambre
dwelte

Within a timé wist and felte,
It helpeth nought all though she
wepe,

For they that shulde her body kepe
Of women were absent as than,
And thus this maiden goth to man.
The wildé fader thus devoureth
His owné flesshe, which none socol-
reth,

And that was cause of mochel care.
But after this unkindé fare
Out of the chambre goth the king.
And she lay still and of this thing
Within her self such sorwe made
There was no wight, that night
her glade,

For fere of thilke horribel vice.
With that came inné the norice,
Which fro childhode her haddé kepte
And axeth if she haddé slepte,
And why her cheré was unglad.
But she, which hath ben overlad
Of that she mighté nought bewreke,
For shamé couth unethés speke.
And nethéles mercý she praide
With weping eye and thus she saide:
'Helas, my suster, wailoway,
That ever I sigh this ilké day.
My worldés worship is berefte.'
With that she swouneth now and eft
And ever wissheth after detli,
So that welnigh her lacketh breth.

"That other, which her wordés
herde,
In comfortíng of her answérde,
'Whan thing is do, there is no bote.
So suffren they that suffren mote.

There was none other, which it wist.
 Thus hath this king all that him list
 And such delite he toke there in,
 Him thoughté that it was no sin.
 And she durst him no thing withsay.
 But Famé, which goth every way,
 To sondry regnés all aboute
 The greaté beauté telleth oute
 Of such a maide of high paráge.
 So that for love of mariáge
 The worthy princes come and sende,
 As they the which all honour wende
 And knew nothing how that it stode.

"The fader whan he understode
 That they his daughter thus be-
 sought,

With all his wit he cast and sought
 How that he mighté finde a lette,
 And such a statute than he sette
 And in this wise his lawé taxeth,
 That what man that his daughter
 axeth,

But if he couthe his question
 Assoile¹ upon suggestion
 Of certein thingés that befelle,
 The which he wolde unto him telle,
 He shulde in certein lese his hede.
 And thus there weré many dede,
 Her hedés stonding on the gate,
 Till atté lasté long and late
 For lacke of answer in this wise
 The remenaunt that weren wise
 Escheueden to make assay.

"Till it befell upon a day
 Appollinus the prince of Tíre,
 Which hath to love a great desire,
 A yonge, a fresh, a lusty knight,
 As he lay musing on a night
 Of the tidíngés, which he herde,
 He thought assay how that it ferde.
 He was with worthy compaignie
 Arraiéd and with good navie
 To ship he goth, the winde him
 driveth,

¹ *Assoile*, solve.

And saileth till that he arriveth
 Sauf in the porte of Antioche.
 He londeth and goth to approche
 The kingés court and his presence.

"Of every natural sciéce
 Whiche any clerké couth him teche
 He couth inough, and in his speche
 Of wordés he was eloquent.
 And whan he sigh the king présent,
 He praieth he mote his daughter
 have.

The king ayein began to crave
 And tolde him the condición,
 How first unto his question
 He mote answer and failé nought,
 Or with his heved it shall be bought.
 And he him axeth, what it was.

"The king declareth him the cas
 With sterné loke and stordy chere,
 To him and said in this manere:
 'With felony I am upbore,
 I ete, and have it nought forlore.
 My moders flesh, whose husebondé,
 My fader, for to seche I fonde,
 Which is the sone eke of my wife.
 Herof I am inquisitife.

And who that can my talé save
 Al quite he shall my daughter have.
 Of his answer and if he faile,
 He shall be dede withouté faile.
 Forthý my soné, quod the king,
 Be wel aviséd of this thing,
 Which hath thy life in jeopartie.
 Appollinus for his partie
 Whan he that question had herde,
 Unto the king he hath answerté
 And hath rehercéed one and one
 The points and saidé therupon:

'The question, which thou hast
 spoke,

If thou wolt that it be unloke, . .
 It toucheth all the priveté
 Betwene thin owné child and the
 And stant all hole upon you two.'
 The king was wonder sory tho

And thought, if that he said it out,
 Than were he shaméd all about,
 With slighé wordés and with felle
 He saith: 'My sone, I shall the telle,
 Though that thou be of litel wit,
 It is no great merveile as yit,
 Thin agé may it nought suffise.
 But loké wel thou nought despise
 Thin owné life, for of my grace
 Of thritty daiés full a space
 I gĩaunté the, to ben avised.'

"And thus with leve and time
 assised

This yongé princé forth he wente
 And understode wel what it mente.
 Within his herte as he was lered,
 That for to maken him afered
 The kinge his time hath so delaied,
 Wherof he drad and was amaied
 Of treson that he deié sholde
 For he the king his sothé tolde.
 And sodeinly the nightés tide,
 That moré wolde he nought abide,
 Al privély his barge he hente
 And home ayein to Tíre he wente.
 And in his owné wit he saide,
 For drede, if he the king bewraide
 He knew so wel the kingés herte
 That deth ne shulde he nought
 asterte,¹

The king him woldé so pursue.
 But he that wolde his deth escheue
 And knewe all this tofore the honde,
 Forsake he thought his owné londe,
 That theré wolde he nought abide.
 For wel he knew that on some side
 This tiraunt of his felonie
 By some manere of trecherie
 To greve his body woll nought leve.

"Forthý withouten taking leve
 As privelich as ever he might
 He goth him to the see by night,
 Her shippés ben with wheté laden,
 Her takil redy tho they maden

And haleth sail and forth they fare.
 But for to tellen of the care,
 That they of Tíre baren tho,
 Whan that they wist he was ago,
 It is a pité for to here.

They losten lust, they losten chere,
 They toke upon hem such penaunce,
 There was no song, there was no
 daunce,

But every merthe and melody
 To hem was than a malady,
 For unlust of that aventure.

Therewasno man which toketonsúre,
 In dolfull clothés they hem clothe.
 The bathés and the stewés bothe
 They shetten in by every wey.

There was no life which listé pley
 Ne take of any joíe kepe,
 But for her legé lord to wepe,
 And every wight said as he couth:
 'Helas, the lusty floure of youth,
 Our prince, our heved, our governour,
 Through whom we stonden in
 honóur,

Withouté the comúné assent,
 That sodeinly is fro us went!'
 Such was the clamour of hem alle.

"But se we now what is befallé
 Upon the firsté talé pleine
 And torné we therto ayeine.

"Antiochus the greté sire,
 Which full of rancour and of ire,
 His herté hereth so as ye herde.
 Of that this prince of Tíre answerde,
 He had a felow bachelor,
 Which was his privé counseiler.
 And Taliart by name he hight.
 The king a strong poisón him dight
 Within a buist¹ and gold therto,
 In allé haste and bad him go
 Straught unto Tíre and for no cost
 Ne sparé till he haddé lost
 The princé which he woldé spill.²
 And whan the king hath said his will

¹ *Asterte*, escape.

¹ *Buist*, box.

² *Spill*, destroy.

This Taliart in a galéy
 With all the haste he toke his wey.
 The wind was good, they saileth blive,
 Till he toke lond upon the rive
 Of Tire and forth with all anone
 Into the burgh he gan to gone
 And toke his inne and bode a throwe.
 But for he woldé nought be knowe,
 Desguiséd than he goth him out.
 He sigh the weping all about
 And axeth, what the causé was.
 And they him tolden all the cas,
 How sodeinly the prince is go.
 And whan he sigh that it was so
 And that his labour was in veine
 Anone he torneth home ayeine
 And to the king whan he cam nigh
 He tolde of that he herde and sigh,
 How that the prince of Tire is fled,
 So was he come ayein unsped.
 The king was sory for a while
 But whan he sigh that with no wile
 He might acheve his cruelté,
 He stint his wrath and let him be.
 "But over this now for to telle
 Of adventúrés that befelle
 Unto this prince, of which I tolde,
 He hath his righté cours forth holde
 By stone and nedel till he cam
 To Tharse, and ther his londe he
 nam,

A bourgeois riche of golde and fee
 Was thilké time in that citee,
 Which clepéd was Strangulio,
 His wife was Dionse also.
 This yongé prince, as saith the boke,
 With him his herbergagé toke,
 And it befell that citee so
 Before time and than also
 Through strongé famin whiche hem
 lad

Was none that any wheté had.
 Appollínus, whan that he herde
 The mischefe, how the citee ferde,
 All frelich of his owné yifte

His whete among hem for to shifte,
 The which by ship he haddé brought,
 He yave, and toke of hem right
 nought.

But sithen first this world began,
 Was never yet to such a man
 More joie made, than they him made.
 For they were all of him so glade
 That they for ever in réembraunce
 Made a figure in résemblaunce
 Of him and in a comun place
 They set it up, so that his face
 Might every maner man beholde
 So as the citee was beholde,
 It was of laton¹ over gilt.

Thus hath he nought his yifté spilt.

"Upon a timé with a route
 This lord to pleié goth him oute
 And in his way of Tire he mette
 Aman, which on his knees him grette,
 And Hellican by name he hight,
 Which praide his lord to have in-
 sight

Upon him self and said him thus,
 How that the great Antiochus
 Awaiteth if he might him spille.
 That other thought and helde him
 stille

And thonkéd him of his warníng
 And bad him tellé no tidíng,
 Whan he to Tire cam home ayeine,
 That he in Tharse him haddé seine.

"Fortúne hath ever be muáble
 And may no whilé stonde stable.
 For now it higheth, now it loweth,
 Now stant upright, now over-
 throweth,

Now full of bliss and now of bale,
 As in the telling of my tale
 Here afterward a man may lere,
 Which is great routhé for to here.

"This lord, which woldé done
 his best,

¹ *Latón*, latten, an alloy of copper with tin; the material of ancient church brasses.

Within him self hath litel rest
And thought he wolde his placé
chaunge

And seke a contré moré straunge.
Of Tharsiens his leve anone
He toke and is to shippé gone.
His cours he nam with saile updrawe,
Where as Fortúné doth the lawe
And sheweth as I shall reherce
How she was to this lord diverse,
Thewhich upon the see sheferketh.¹
The winde aros, the wether derketh,
It blew and madé such tempést,
None anker may the ship arest,
Which hath to-broken all his gere.
Thè shipmen stood in such a fere,
Was none that might him self
bestere,

But ever awaite upon the lere²
Whan that they sholden drenche
at ones.

There was inough within the wones
Of weping and of sorwe tho.
The yongé king maketh mochel wo
So for to se the ship travaile,
But all that might him nought avail.
The mast to-brake, the sail to-rofe,³
The ship upon the wawés drofe,
Till that they se the londés coste,
Tho made a vow the leste and moste,
Be so they mighten come a londe.
But he which hath the se on honde,
Neptunus, woldé nought accorde,
But all to-brake cable and corde,
Er they to londé mighte approche.
The ship to-clef upon a roche
And all goth down into the depe.
But he that allé thing may kepe
Unto this lord was merciáble
And brought him sauf upon a table⁴
Which to the londe him hath upbore,
The remenaunt was all forelore,
Herof he madé mochel mone.

¹ *berketh*, hastens.

² Wait to learn.

³ *To-rofe*, was riven to shreds.

⁴ *Table*, plank.

"Thus was this yongé lorde alone
All naked in a pouér plite.

His colour which was whilom white
Was than of water fade and pale,
And eke he was so sore a cale,¹
That he wist of him self no bote,
It helpe him no thing for to mote²
To gete ayein that he hath lore.
But she which hath his deth forbore,
Fortúné, though she woll nought
yelpé,³

All sodeinly hath sent him helpe
Whan him thought allé grace away.
There came a fissher in the wey
And sigh a man there naked stonde.
And whan that he hath understonde
The cause, he hath of him great
routh

And onlch of his pouér trouth
Of suché clothés as he hadde
With great pité this lord he cladde.
And he him thonketh as he sholde⁴
And saith him that it shall be yolde,⁴
If ever he gete his state ayein,
And praieth, that he wolde him sain
If nigh were any town for him.
He saidé : ' Ye, Pentopolim,
Where bothé king and quené
dwellen.'

Whan he this talé herdé tellen,
He gladdeth him and gan beseche,
That he the wey him woldé teche.
And he him taught. And forth he
went

And praidé God with good entent
To sende him joy after his sorwe.

"It was nought passéd yet mid-
morwe,⁵

Than thiderward his wey he nam,
Where sone upon the none he cam.
He eté such as he might gete,
And forth anone whan he had ete,

¹ *A cale*, a cold.

² *Mote*, sue.

³ *Yelpé*, boast.

⁴ *Yolde*, repaid.

⁵ *Midmorwe*, half way between sunrise and

He goth to se the town about,
 And cam there as he found a rout
 Of yongé lusty men withall.
 And as it shuldé tho befall,
 That day was set of such assise,
 That they shulde in the londés gise
 As he herde of the people say
 Her comun gamé thanné pley.
 And criéd was, that they shuld come
 Unto the gamés all and some
 Of hem that ben deliver¹ and wight
 To do such maistry as they might.
 They inade hem naked as they
 sholde,

For so that ilké gamé wolde
 And it was tho custume and use,
 Amongés hem was no refuse.
 The floure of all the town was there
 And of the court also there were,
 And that was in a largé place
 Right even before the kingés face,
 Whiche Artestrates thanné hight.
 The pley was pleied right in his sight,
 And who most worthy was of dede
 Receive he shulde a certain mede
 And in the citee bere a price.

"Appollinus which ware and wise
 Of every gamé couth an ende,
 He thought assay how so it wende.
 And fell among hem into game,
 And there he wanne him such a
 name,

So as the king him self accompteth,
 That he all other men surmounteth
 And bare the prise above hem alle.
 The king bad that into his halle
 At souper time he shall be brought.
 And he cam than and lefte it nought,
 Withouté compaigný alone.
 Was none so semelich of persone,
 Of visage and of limmés bothe,
 If that he haddé what to clothe.
 At souper timé nethéles

¹ *Deliver*, suppl. Chaucer's Squire was
 "wonderly deliver and grete of strength."

The king amidde^s all the pres
 Let clepe him up amonge hem alle
 And bad his maresshall of his halle
 To setten him in such degre.
 That he upon him mighté se.
 The king was soné sette and served,
 And he which had his prise deserved
 After the kingés owné worde,
 Was made begin a middel borde
 That bothé king and quene him sigh.
 He sette and cast about his eye,
 And sigh the lordés in estate
 And with him self wax in debate
 Thenkénd of what he haddé lore,
 And such a sorwe he toke therfore,
 That he sat ever still and thought,
 As he which of no meté rought.

"The king behelde his hevynesse
 And of his greté gentillesse
 His doughter which was faire and
 good

And atté bord before him stood,
 As it was thilké time uságe,
 He bad to go on his messáge
 And foundé¹ for to make him glad.
 And she did as her fader bad
 And goth to him the softé pas
 And axeth whenne and what he was,
 And praithe he shulde his thoughtés
 leve.

"Hesaith: 'Madamé, by your leve.
 My name is hote Appollinus,
 And of my richesse it is thus,
 Upon the sec I have it lore.
 The contré where as I was bore,
 Where that my lond is and my rente,
 I lefte at Tíre whan that I wente,
 The worship there of which I ought
 Unto the God I there betought.'
 And thus to-gider as they two speke,
 The térés ran down by his cheke.
 The king, which therof toke good
 kepe,

Had great pité to se him wepe

¹ *Foundé*, try.

And for his doughter send ayein
And praid her faire and gan to sain
That she no lenger woldé drecche,¹
But that she wolde anone forth
fecche

Her harpe and done all that she can
To gladdé with that sory man.
And she to done her faders hest
Her harpé set and in the feste
Upon a charé which they sette
Her self next to this man she sette.
With harpé both and eke with
mouthe

To him she did all that she couthe
To make him chere, and ever he
siketh,

And she him axeth how him liketh.

'Madamé, certés well,' he saide,

'But if ye the mesuré plaide
Which, if you list, I shall you lere,
It were a glad thing for to here.'

'Ha, levé siré,' tho quod she,

'Now take the harpe and let me se,
Of what mesuré that ye mene.'

"Tho praith the king, tho praith
the quene,

Forth with the lordés all arewe,
That he some merthé woldé shewe.
He taketh the harpe and in his wise
He tempreth, and of suche assise
Singend he harpeth forth withall
That as a vois celestiall

Hem thought it souned in her ere,
As though that he an aungel were.
They gladen of his melody,

But most of all the company
The kingés doughter, which it herde,
And thoughte ke of that he answärde
Whan that it was of her apposed,
Within her hert hath well supposed
That he is of great gentillesse;
His dedés ben therof witnesse

Forth with the wisdomé of his lore,
It nedeth nought to seché more.

¹ *Drecche*, delay.

He might nought havé such manere,
Of gentil blood but if he were.

Whan he hath harpéd all his fill
The kingés hesté to fulfill;

Away goth dish, away goth cup,
Down goth the bord, the cloth was
up,

They risen and gone out of halle.

"The king his chamberlein let
calle

And bad, that he by allé wey
A chambre for this man purvey,
Which nigh his owné chambre be.
'It shall be do, my lord,' quod he.

"Appollinus, of whom I mene,
Tho toke his leve of king and quene
And of the worthy maide also,
Which praid unto her fader tho,
That she might of the yongé man
Of tho sciénces which he can,
His loré have. And in this wise
The king her graunteth his apprise,
So that him self therto assent.
Thus was accorded er they went
That he with all that ever he may
This yongé fairé freshé may¹

Of that he couthé shulde enforme.
And ful assented in this forme
They token leve as for that night.

"And whan it was on morwright,
Unto this yongé man of Tire
Of clothés and of good attire
With gold and silver to despende
This worthy yongé lady sende.
And thus she made him well at ese,
And he with all that he can plesé
Her serveth well and faire ayeine.
He taught her till she was certeine
Of harpé, citole and of riote²
With many a tune and many a note,
Upon musque, upon mesuré,
And of her harpé the tempurure

¹ *May*, maid.

² *Citole*, a stringed instrument played with the fingers; *riote*, rote, three-stringed fiddle played with a bow.

He taught her eke, as he well couth.
But as men sain that frele is youth,
With leiser and continuaunce,
This maidé fell upon a chaunce,
That love hath made him a quarele
Ayeinc her youthé fresh and frele,
That malgré where¹ she wold or
nought,

She mot with all her hertés thought
To love and to his lawe obey.
And that she shall full sore abey,
For she wot never what it is.
But ever among she feleth this,
Thenkend upon this man of Tire,
Her herte is hote as any fire,
And otherwise it is acale.²
Now is she rēd, now is she pale
Right after the condition
Of her ymaginación.

But ever among her thoughtés alle,
She thoughté, what so may befallé,
Or that she laugh, or that she wepe,
She wolde her godé namé kepe
For fere of womanisshe shame.
But what in earnest, what in game,
She stant for love in such a plite
That she hath lost all appetite
Of mete and drinke, of nightés rest,
As she that not³ what is the best.
But for to thenken till her fille
She helde her ofté timés stille
Within her chambre and goth
• nought out.

The king was of her life in doubt,
Which wisté nothing what it ment.

“But fell a time, as he out went
To walke, of princes sonés thre
There came and fellé to his knee,
And eche of hem in sondry wise
Besought and profreth his service,
So that he might his daughter have.
The king, which wold her honour
save,

Saith, she is sike, and of that speche
Tho was no timé to beseche,
But eche of hem to make a bille
He bad and write his owné willé.
His name, his fader and his good.
And whan she wist how that it stood,
And had her billés oversein,
They shulden have answeré ayein.
Of this counseil they weren glad
And writen as the king hem bad,
And every man his owné boke
Into the kingés hond betoke.
And he it to his doughter sende
And praide her for to make an ende
And write ayein her owné honde,
Right as she in her herté fonde.

“The billés weren well received,
But she hath all her lovés weived
And thoughté tho was time and space
To put her in her faders grace
And wrote ayein and thus she saide:

‘The shamé which is in a maide
With speché dare nought beunloke,
But in writing it may be spoke.
So write I to you, fader, thus,
But if I have Appollinus,
Of all this world what so betide
I woll non other man abide.
And certes if I of him faile
I wot right well withouté faile
Ye shull for me be doughterles.’
This letter came, and there was pres
To-fore the king there as he stode.
And whan that he it understode,
He yave hem answeré by and by.
But that was done so privély,
That none of others counseil wiste.
They toke her leve, and where hem
liste,

They wenté forth upon her wey.

“The king ne woldé nought
bewrey

The counseil for no maner high,¹
But suffreth till he time sigh.

¹ Where, whether.

² Acale, acold.

³ Not, knows not.

¹ High, for lie, hasty.

And whan that he to chambre is
come,

He hath unto his counseil nome
This man of Türe and lete him se
The letter, and all the privéé
The which hisdoughter to him sente.
And he his kne to groundé bente
And thonketh him and her also.
And er they wenten than a two
With good herte and with good
coräge

Of full love and full mariäge
The kinge and heben hole accorded.
And after, whan it was recorded
Unto the doughter how it stood,
The yifte of all this worldés good
Ne shuld have made her half so
blithe.

And forthwith all the kinge alsswithe,
For he woll have her good assent,
Hath for the quene her moder sent.
The quene is come, and whan she
herde

Of this matere how that it ferde,
She sigh debate she sigh disese
But if she wolde her doughter plese,
And is therto assented ful,
Whiche is a dedé wonderful,
For no man knew the sothé cas,
But he him self, what man he was.
And nethcles so as hem thought
His dedés to the sothé wrought,
That he was come of gentil blood,
Him lacketh nought but worldés
good,

And as therof is no despeire,
For she shall be her faders heire
And he was able to góvërne,
Thus woll they nought the lové werne¹
Of him and hiré by no wise,
But all accorded they devise
The day and time of mariäge,
Where love is lorde of the corage.
Him thenketh longe er that he spede,

¹ Werne, forbid.

But atté laste unto the dede
The time is come, and in her wise
With great offrénd and sacrifice
They wedde and make a riché fest,
And every thing was right honést
Withinné hous and eke without.
It was so done, that all about
Of great worship and great noblesse
There criéd many a man largesse
Unto the lordés high and loude.
The knightes, that ben yonge and
proude,

They jesté¹ first and after daunce.
The day is go, the nightés chaunce
Hath derkéð all the brighte sonne.
This lord hath thus his lové wonne.

"Now have I tolde of the spou-
sailles.

But for to speke of the merveiles,
Which afterward to hem befelle,
It is a wonder for to telle.

"It fell a day they riden out
The kinge and quene and all the rout
To pleien hem upon the stronde,
Where as they secn toward the londe
A ship sailénd of great array;
To knowé what it mené may,
Till it be comé they abide.
Than se they stonde on every side
Endlong the shippés bord to shewe
Of penouncels a riché rewe.
They axen whenne the ship is come.
Fro Türe, anone answérde some.
And over this they saiden more
The causé why they comen fore
Was for to seche and for to finde
Appollinus, which is of kinde
Her legé lord. And he appereth
And of the talé whiche he hereth
He was right glad, for they him tolde,
That for vengeaunce, as God it wolde,
Antiochus as men may wite
With thunder and lightning is for-
smite.

¹ Justé, joust.

His daughter hath the same chaunce.
So be they both in o balaunce.

Forthy, our legé lord, we say
In name of all the lond and pray,
That left all other thing to done
It like you to comé sone
And se your owné legé men
With other that ben of your ken
That live in longing and desire
Till ye be come ayein to Tire.
This tale after the king it had
Pentapolim all oversprad.

There was no joíe for to seche,
For every man it had in speche
And saiden all of one accorde:
'A worthy king shall ben our lorde;
That thought us first an hevinesse
Is shape us now to great gladnéssc.'
Thus goth the tiding over all.

"But nede he mot that nedéshall.
Appollinus his levé toke,

• To God and all the lond betoke¹
With all the people longe and brode,
That he no lenger there abode..

"The king and quené sorwe made,
But yet somdele they weren glade
Of such thing as they herden tho.
And thus betwene the wele and wo
To ship he goth, his wife with childe,
The which was ever meke and milde
And woldé nought departe him fro,
Such lové was betwene hem two.
Liethorida for her office
Was také, which was a norice,
To wendé with this yongé wife,
To whom was shape a wofull life.
Within a time, as it betid,
Whan they were in the see amid,
Out of the north they sigh a cloude,
The storme aros, the windés loude.
They blwen many a dredefull blast,
The welken was all overcast.
The derké night the sonne hath
under,

¹ Betoke, commended, entrusted.

There was a great tempest of
thunder.

The mone and eke the sterres bothe
In blacké cloudés they hem clothe,
Wherof her brighté loke they hide.
This yongé lady wept and cride
To whom no comfort might availe,
Of childé she began travaile
Where she lay in a caban close.
Her wofull lord fro her arose,
And that was long er any morwe,
So that in anguish and in sorwe
She was delivered all by night
And deiede in every mannés sight.

"But netheles for all this wo
A maidé child was boré tho.

"Appollinus whan he this knewe,
For sorwe a swoune he overthrewe
That no man wist in him no life.
And whan he woke, he saide: 'Ha,
wife,

My joy, my lust and my desire,
My welth and my recoverire,
Why shall I live, and thou shalt deie?
Ha, thou Fortúne, I the defie,
Now hast thou do to me thy werst.
Ha, herté, why ne wolt thou berst,
That forth with her I mighté passe?
My painés weré well the lasse.
In such weping and suché crie
His dedé wife which lay him by
A thousand sithés he her kiste,
Was never man that sigh ne wiste
A sorwe to his sorwe liche,
Was ever among upon the liche.¹
He fell swounénde as he that thought
His owné deth, which he besought
Unto the goddés all above
With many a pitous word of love.
But suché wordés as tho were
Yet herdé never mannés ere,
But only thilké which he saide.
The maister shipman came and
praide

¹ The liche, the body (of his dead wife).

With other such as ben therinne,
 And sain that he may nothing winne
 Ayein the deth, but they him rede
 He be well ware and také hede,
 The see by wey of his natúre
 Receivé may no creätüre
 Within him self as for to holde
 The which is dede. Forthý they
 wolde,

As they counseilen all about,
 The dedé body casten out.
 For better it is, they saiden all,
 That it of hiré so befall,
 Than if they shulden allé spille.

“The king, which understode
 her will

And knew her counseil that was
 trewe,

Began ayein his sorwe newe
 With pitous hert and thus to say :
 ‘It is all reson that ye pray.
 I am,’ quod he, ‘but one alone.
 So wolde I nought for my persone
 There fellé such adversité.
 But whan it may no better be
 Doth thanné thus upon my worde,
 Let make a coffre stronge of borde,
 That it be firm with led and piche.’
 Anone was made a coffre sicke
 All redy brought unto his honde.
 And whan he sighe and redy fonde
 This coffre made and well englued,
 The dedé body was besewed
 In cloth of gold and laid therinne.
 And for he wolde unto her winne
 Upon some coste¹ a sepulture,
 Under her heved in adventüre
 Of gold he laidé sommés great
 And of juéls a strong beyéte
 Forth with a letter, and said thus :

‘I, king of Tíre, Appollinus
 Doth allé maner men to wite,
 That here and se this letter write,
 That helpelés withouté rede

Here lith a kingés doughter dede,
 And who that hapneth her to finde
 For charité take in his minde
 And do so that she be begrave
 With this tresór which he shal have.’

“Thus whan the letter was full
 spoke,

They have anone the coffre stoke
 And bounden it with iron faste,
 That it may with the wawés laste,
 And stoppen it by such a wey
 That it shall be withinné drey,
 So that no water might it greve.
 And thus in hope and good beleve
 Of that the corps shall well arrive,
 They cast it over borde as blive.

“The ship forth on the wawés
 went,

The prince hath chaungéd his entent,
 And saith, he woll nought come at
 Tíre

As thanné, but all his desire
 Is first to sailen unto Tharse.

The windy storm began to scarce,
 The sonne arist, the weder clereth,
 The shipman which behindé stereth,
 Whan that he sigh the windéssaught,
 Towardés Tharse his cours he
 straught.

“But now to my matere ayein,
 To telle as oldé bokés sain
 This dedé corps of whiche ye knowe
 With winde and water was forth
 throwe,

Now here, now there, till atté last
 At Ephesim the see upcast
 The coffre and all that was therinne.
 Of great mervilé now beginne
 May heré who that sitteth still.
 That God woll savé may nought spill.
 Right as the corps was throwe a
 londe,

There cam walkénd upon the stronde
 A worthy clerke and surgien
 And eke a great phisicién,

¹ *Coste*, coast.

Of all that lond the wisest one,
Which highté maister Cerimon.
There were of his disciples some.
This maister is to the coffre come,
He peiseth there was somwhat in
And had hem bere it to his inne,
And goth him selvé forth with all.
All that shall fallé, fallé shall.

“They comen home and tarie
nought.

This coffre into his chambre is
brought,

Which that they findé fasté stoke,
But they with craft it have unloke.
They loken in, whereas they founde,
A body dede, which was iwounde
In cloth of gold, as I said ere.
The tresor eke they founden there
Forth with the letter, which they rede.
And tho they token better hede.

• Unswéd was the body sone,
As he that knewe what was to done,
This noble clerk with allé haste
Began the veinés for to taste.¹
And sigh her^a agé was of youthe;
And with the craftés which he
couthe

He sought and found a signe of life.
With that this worthy kingés wife
Honestély they token out
And maden firés all about.
They laid her on a couché softe,
And with a sheté warmed ofte
Her coldé brest began to hete,
Her herte also to flacke² and bete.
This maister hath her every jointe
With certain oil and balsme anointe,
And put a liquour in her mouthe
Which is to fewé clerkes couthe,
So that she covereth atté laste.
And first her eyen up she caste,
And whan she more of strengthé
caught,

Her armés bothé forth she straught,

¹ Taste, try by touch.

² Flacke, flutter.

Held up her hond and pitously
She spake and saidé: ‘Where am I?
Where is my lord, what world is
this?’

As she that wot nought how it is.
But Cerimon that worthy leche
Answerde anone upon her speche
And said: ‘Madamé, ye ben here,
Where ye be sauf, as ye shall here
Hereafterward, forthy as now
My counsel is, comfórteth you.
For tristeth wel, withouté faile,
There is no thing which shall you
faile,

That ought of reson to be do.’
Thus passen they a day or two;
They speke of nought as for an ende,
Till she began somdele amende,
And wist her selven whatshemente.

“Tho for to knowe her hole
entente

This maister axeth all the cas,
How she cam there, and what she
was.

‘How I came heré, wote I nought,’
Quod she, ‘but wel I am bethought
Of other thingés all about
Fropoint to point,’ and tolde him out
Als ferforthly as she it wiste.

And he her tolde how in a kiste
The see her threwe upon the londe,
And what tresór with her he fonde,
Which was all redy at her will,
As he that shope him to fulfill
With al his might what thing he
shuld.

She thonketh him that he so wolde,
And all her herté she discloseth
And saith him well that she sup-
poseth,

Her lord be dreint, her childe also.
So sigh she nought but allé wo.
Wherof as to the world no more
Ne woll she torne and prieth ther-
fore,

That in some temple of the citee
To kepe and holde her chasteté
She might among the women dwelle.
Whan he this talé herdé telle
He was right glad, and made her
known

That he a doughter of his owen
Hath, which he woll unto her yive
To servé while they bothé live,
In stede of that which she hath loste;
All only at his owné coste
She shall be rendred forth with her.
She saith, 'Graunt mercy, levé sir,
God quite it you, there I ne may.'
And thus they drivé forth the day
Till timé cam that she was hole.
And tho they take her counseil hole
To shape upon good ordenaunce
And make a worthy purveaunce
Ayein the day whan they be veiled.
And thus whan that they were
counseiled,

In blacké clothés they hem clothe
This lady and the doughter bothe
And yolde hem to religiún.
The feste and the professiún
After the reule of that degré
Was made with great solempnité,
Where as Diane is sanctified.
Thus stant this lady justified
In ordre where she thenketh to
dwelle.

"But now ayeinward for to telle,
In what plite that her lord stood inne.
He saileth till that he may winne
The haven of Tharse, as I saide ere.
And whan he was arrivéd there,
Tho it was through the cité knowe,
Men mighté se within a throwe
As who saith all the towne at ones.
They come ayein him for the nones
To yiven him the reverence,
So glad they were of his preséce.
And though he were in his coráge
Diseséd, yet with glad viságe

He made hem chere and to his inne,
Where he whilom sojournéd in,
He goth him straught and was
received.

And whan the press of people is
weived,

He taketh his host unto him tho
And saith, 'My frend Strangulio,
Lo thus and thus it is befallé,
And thou thy self art one of alle,
Forth with thy wife, which I most
trist,

Forthý if it you bothé list,
My doughter Thaisé by your leve
I thenké shall with you beleve
As for a time, and thus I pray
That she be kept by allé way,
And whan she hath of agé more,
That she be set to bokés lore.
And this avow to God I make,
That I shall never for her sake
My berdé for no liking shave
Till it befallé that I have
In covenáble time of age
Besette her unto mafiáge.

"Thus they accorde, and all is
well.

And for to resten him somdele
Yet for a while he ther sojórneþ,
And than he taketh his leve and
torneth

To ship and goth him home to Tíre,
Where every man with great desíre
Awaiteth upon his comíng.
But whan the ship cam in sailing
And they perceiven it is he,
Was never yet in no citee
Such joíé made, as they tho made.
His hert also began to glade
Of that he seeth his people glad.
Lo, thus Fortúne his hap hath lad,
In sondry wise he was travailed,
But how so ever he be assailed,
His latter endé shall be good.

"And for to speke how that it stood

Of Thaise his doughter, wher she
dwelleth,

In Tharse as the croniqué telleth
Shewaswellkept, shewaswellloked,
She was wel taught, she was wel
boked,

So well she sped her in her youth
That she of every wisdom couth,
That for to seche in every londe
So wise an other no man fonde
Ne so well taught at mannés eye.
But wo worth ever false envý.
For it befell that timé so,
A doughter hath Strangulio,
The which was clepéd Philotenne.
But Famé, which woll ever renne,
Came all day to her moders ere
And saith, wher ever her doughter
were

With Thaisé set in any place
The commun vois the commun grace
Was all upon that other maide,
And of her doughter no man saide.
Who was wroth but Dionisé than?
Her thought^a a thousand yere till
whan

She mighté be of Thaisé wreke
Of that she herdé folk so speke.
And fell that ilké samé tide,
That dede was trewé Lichoride
Whiche haddé be servaúnt to
Thaise,

So that she was the wors at ese.
For she hath thanné no servise
But onely through this Dionisé
Which was her dedlich enemy.
Through puré treson and envý
She that of allé sorwe can
Tho spake unto her bondéman
Which clepéd was Theophilus
And made him swere in counseil
thus,

That he such time as she him set
Shall come Thaisé for to fet
And lede her out of allé sight

Where that no man her helpé might
Upon the strondé nigh the see,
And there he shall this maiden slee.
This cherlés hert is in a traunce,
Ashewhich drad him of vengeaúnce
Whan timé comth an other day.
But yet durst he nought saié nay,
But swore and said he shall fulfill.
Her hestés at her owné will.

"Thetreson and thetime is shape,
So fell it that this cherlish knape¹
Hath lad this maiden where he wold
Upon the stronde, and what she
sholde

She was adrad, and he out braide
A rusty swerde and to her saide :
'Thou shalt be dede.' 'Alas,'
quod she,
'Whyshall I so?' 'Lothus,' quod he,
'My lady Dionise hath bede,
Thoushalt be mured in this stede.'
This maiden tho for feré shrighthe
And for the love of God Allmighte
She praith that for a litel stounde
She mighté knele upon the grounde
Toward the heven for to crave,
Her wofull soule if she may save.
And with this noise and with this cry,
Out of a bargé fasté by,
Which hid was there onscomer-fare,²
Men sterten out and weren ware
Of this felón, and he to go,
And she began to crié tho,
'Ha, mercy, help for Goddes sake,'
Into the bargé they her take,
Asthevés shulde, and forth they went.
Upon the see the wind hem hent
And malgré wherethey wolde or none
To-fore the weder forth they gone,
There halp nosail there halp none or
Forstorméd and forblowen sore

¹ *Knape*, lad.

² *Scomer-fare*, ? for lying in wait in creeks, from some word having its root in *scá* or *scr*, to cover and conceal, whence *skua*, *scudo*, shadow?

In great perill so forth they drive,
 'Till atté lasté they arrive
 At Miteléné the citee.
 In haven sauf and whan they be
 The maister shipman made him
 bounce¹

And goth him out into the towne
 And profreth Thaisé for to selle.
 One Leonin it herdé telle,
 Which maister of the bordel was,
 And bad him gon a redy pas
 To fecchen her, and forth he went
 And Thaise out of his barge he hent
 And solde her to the bordel tho.
 No wonder is though she be wo
 Clos in a chambre by her self.
 Eche after other ten or twelf
 Of yongé men in to her went.
 But suche a gracé God her sent,
 That for the sorwe which she made,
 Was none of hem which power had
 To done her any vilany.

"This Leonin let ever aspy
 And waiteth after great beyete,
 But all for nought, she was forlete,
 That no man woldé theré come.
 Whan he therof hath hede nome
 He sent his man, but so it ferde,
 Whan he her wofull pleintés herde
 And he therof hath také kepe,
 Him listé better for to wepe
 Than don ought ellés to the game.
 And thus she kepte herself fro shame
 And kneléd down to therthe and
 praide

Unto this man and thus she saide :

'If so be, that thy maister wolde
 That I his gold encrese sholde
 It may nought fallé by this wey,
 But suffre me to go my wey
 Out of this hous where I am in,
 And I shall make him for to win
 In some place ellés of the town,
 Be so it be of religioun,

¹ *Bonne, ready.*

Where that honésté women dwelle,
 And thus thou might thy 'maister
 telle,

That whan I have a chambre there
 Let him do cry ay widé where,
 What lord that hath his doughter
 dere

And is in will that she shall lere
 Of such a scolé that is trewe,
 I shall her teche of thingés newe
 Whiche as none other woman can
 In all this londe.' And tho this man
 Her tale hath herde he goth ayein
 And tolde unto his maister plein,
 That she hath saide. And then upon,
 Whan that he sigh beyeté none
 At the bordél because of hire,
 He bad his man to gon and spire
 A placé where she might abide,
 That he may winne upon some side
 By that she can. But atté lest
 Thus was she sauf of this tempést.

"He hath her fro the bordel take,
 But that was nought for Goddés
 sake,

But for the lucre, as she him tolde.
 Now comen tho that comen wolde,
 Of women in her lusty youth
 To here and se what thing she couth.
 She can the wisdomé of a clerke,
 She can of any lusty werke
 Which to a gentil woman longeth.
 And some of hem she underfongeth
 To the citole and to the harpe,
 And whom it liketh for to carpe
 Proverbés and demaundés sligh
 An other such they never sigh
 Which that sciéncé so well taught,
 Wherof she greté yiftés caught,
 That she to Leonin hath wonne.
 And thus her name is so begonne
 Of sondry thingés that she techeth,
 That all the londé to her secheth
 Of yongé women for to lere.

"Now letté we this maiden here

And speke of Dionise ayeine
 And of Theophile the vilaine
 Of which I spake of now to-fore,
 Whan Thaisé shulde have beforlore.
 This falsé cherle to his lady
 Whan he cam home all prively,
 He saith, 'Madamé, slain I have
 This maidé Thaise, and is begrave
 In privé place, as ye me bede.
 Forthy, madamé, taketh hede
 And kepe counseil, how so it
 stonde.'

This fend, which hath this under-
 stonde,

Was glad and weneth it be soth.
 Now herke, hereafter how she doth.
 She wepeth, she sorweth, she com-
 pleigneth,

And of sikenessé which she feigneth,
 She saith, that Thaisé sodeinly
 By night is dede, as she and I
 To-gider lien nigh my lorde.
 She was a woman of recorde,
 And all is levéd that she saith:
 And for to yive a moré feith,
 Her husebonde and eke she bothe
 In blacké clothés they hem clothe,
 And make a great enterrément.
 And for the people shall be blent
 Of Thaise as for the rémembraunce,
 After the réal¹ olde usaunce
 A tumbé of laton noble and riche
 With an ymâge unto her liche
 Liggénd abové therupon
 They made and set it up anon.
 Her epitaphe of good assise
 Was write about, and in this wise
 It spake: 'O ye, that this beholde,
 Lo, here lieth she, the which was
 holde

The fairest and the floure of alle,
 Whose namé Thaisis men calle.
 The king of Tíre Appollinus
 Her fader was, now lieth she thus.

¹ *Real*, regal.

Fourtené yere she was of age,
 Whan deth her toke to his viage.'

Thus was this falsé treson hid,
 Which afterward was widé kid,
 As by the tale a man shall here.
 But to declaré my matere
 To Tíre I thenké torne ayein
 And telle as the croníqués sain.
 Whan that the king was comen home
 And hath left in the salté fome
 His wife which he may nought
 foryete,

For he some comfort woldé gete
 He let sommone a parlément,
 To which the lbrdés were assent.¹
 And of the time he hath ben out,
 He seeth the thingés all about;
 And tolde hemeke, how he hath fare,
 While he was out of londé fare,
 And praide hem allé to abide,
 For he wolde at the samé tide
 Do shapé for his wivés minde.²
 As he that woll nought ben unkinde.
 Solempné was that ilke office,
 And riché was the sacrifice,
 The festé réally³ was holde.
 And therto was he well beholde:
 For suche a wife as he had one
 In thilké daiés was there none.

"Whan this was done, than he
 him thought

Upon his daughter, and besought
 Such of his lordés as he wolde,
 That they with him to Tharsé sholde
 To fet his daughter Thaisé there,
 And they anone all redy were.
 To ship they gone and forth they went
 Till they the haven of Tharsé hent.
 They londe and faile of that they
 seche,

By coverture and sleight of speche.
 This falsé man Strangulio
 And Dionise his wife also,

¹ *Assent*, summoned.

² In memory of his wife.

³ *Really*, royally.

That he the better trowé might,
 They ladden him to have a sight,
 Where that her tombé was arraied,
 The lassé yet he was mispaied.
 And nethéles so as he durst,
 He curseth and saith all the worst
 Unto Fortúne, as to the blinde,
 Which can no siker weie finde,
 For she him neweth ever amonge
 And medleth sorwe with his songe.
 But sithe it may no better be,
 He thonketh God and forth goth he
 Sailéndé toward Tire ayeine.
 But sodeinly the winde and reine
 Began upon the see debate,
 So that he suffre mote algate
 The lawé, which Neptúne
 deineth,

Wherof full ofté time he pleigneth
 And held him wel the more esmaied
 Of that he hath to-fore assaied.
 So that for puré sorwe and care
 Of that he seeth this world so fare,
 The reste he levethe of his cabán,
 That for the counseil of no man
 Ayein therin he noldé come
 But hath beneth his placé nome,
 Where he wepénd alloné lay
 There as he sigh no light of day.

"And thus to-fore the wind they
 drive

Till longe and laté they arrive
 With great distresse, as it was sene,
 Upon this town of Mitelene,
 Which was a noble cité tho.
 And happneth thilké timé so,
 The lordés both and the commúne
 The highé festés of Neptune
 Upon the strond at the rivage,
 As it was custume and usage,
 Solempneliché they besigh.

"Whan they this straungé vessel
 sigh
 Come in, and hath his saile aualed,¹

¹ *Aualed*, lowered.

The town therof hath spoke and
 taled.

The lord which of that cité was,
 Whose name is Athenagoras,
 Was there and said, he woldé se
 What ship it is, and who they be
 That ben therin. And after sone,
 Whan that he sigh it was to done,
 His barge was for him arraied,
 And he goth forth and hath assaied.
 He found the ship of great array,
 But what thing it amounté may,
 He sigh they maden hevy chere,
 But well him thenketh by the manere,
 That they be worthy men of blood,
 And axeth of hem how it stood.
 And they him tellen all the cas,
 How that her lord fordrivé was,
 And what a sorwé that he made
 Of which there may no man him
 glade.

He praieth that he her lord may se.
 But they him tolde it maynought be,
 For he lith in so derke a place
 That there may no wight sen his face.
 But for all that, though hem be loth,
 He found the ladder and down he
 goth

And to him spake, but none answer
 Ayein of him ne might he bere,
 For ought that he can do or sain.
 And thus he goth him up ayein.

"Tho was there spoke in many
 wise

Amongés hem that weren wise,
 Now this, now that, but atté last
 The wisdom of the town thus cast,
 That yongé Thaisé were assent.
 For if there be amendément
 To gladdé with this wofull king,
 She can so moch of every thing
 That she shall gladen him anone.

"A messenger for her is gone.
 And she came with her harp on honde
 And saide hem, that she woldé fonde

By allé weies that she can,
 To gladdé with this sory man.
 And what he was, she wiste nought.
 But all the ship her hath besought
 That she her wit on him despende
 In aunter if he might amende,
 And sain, 'It shall be well aquit.'
 Whan she hath understonden it,
 She goth her down, there as he lay,
 Where that she harpeth many a lay
 And lich an aungel sang with alle.
 But he no moré than the walle
 Toke hede of any thing he herde.
 And whan she sigh that he so ferde,
 She falleth with him unto wordes,
 And telleth him of sondry bordes,
 And axeth him demaundés straunge
 Wherof she made his herté chaunge,
 And to her speche his ere he laide
 And hath merveile, of that she saide.
 For in proverbe and in probléme
 She spake and bade he shuldé deme
 In many a subtil question.
 But he for no suggestion
 Which toward him she couthe sterc
 He woldé nought o word answeré,
 But as a mad man atté laste,
 His heved weping away he caste
 And half in wrath he bad her go.
 But yet she woldé nought do so,
 And in the derké forth she goth,
 Till she him toucheth, and he wroth
 And after hiré with his honde
 He smote. And thus whan she
 him fonde
 Diseséd, courteisly she saide :
 'Avoy my lorde, I am a maide.
 And if ye wisté what I am,
 And out of what lignáge I cam,
 Ye woldé nought be so salváge.'
 With that he sobreth his coráge
 And put away his hevvy chere.
 But of hem two a man may lere,
 What is to be so sibbe of blood.
 None wist of other how it stood,

And yet the fader atté last
 His herte upon this maide cast,
 That he her loveth kindly,
 And yet he wisté never why ;
 But all was knowe er that they went.
 For God, which wote her hole entent,
 Her hertés both anone descloseth.
 This king unto this maide opposeth
 And axeth first, What is her name,
 And where she lernéd all this game,
 And of what kin that she was come ?
 And she, that hath his wordés nome,
 Answereth and saith : 'My name
 is Thaise,

That was sometímé well at ese.
 In Tharse I was forthdrawe and
 fedde,

There lernéd I till I was spedde
 Of that I can. My fader eke
 I not¹ where that I shulde him seke,
 He was a king, men toldé me.
 My moder dreint was in the see.
 Fro point to point all she him tolde,
 That she hath longe in herté holde,
 And never dursté make her mone,
 But only to this lord allone,
 To whom her herté can nought hele,²
 Torne it to wo torne it to wele,
 Torne it to good torne it to harme.
 And he tho toke her in his arme.
 But such a joy as he tho made
 Was never sene ; thus be they glade
 That sory hadden be to-forne.
 Fro this day forth Fortúne hath
 sworne

To set him upward on the whele ;
 Sogoth the world ; now wo, now wele.

"This king hath foundé newé
 grace,

So that out of his derké place
 He goth him up into the light.
 And with him cam that sweté wight
 His daughter Thaise, and forth anone
 They bothe into the caban gone

¹ Not, know not.

² Hele, conceal.

Which was ordeined for the kinge.
And there he did of all his thinge
And was arraiéd really,
And out he cam all openly
Where Athenagoras he fonde.
The which was lorde of all the
londe.

He praieth the king to come and se
His castell bothe and his citee.
And thus they gone forth all in fere,
This king, this lord, this maiden
dere.

This lord tho made hem riché feste
With every thing which was
honéste

To plesé with this worthy kinge,
Ther lacketh hem no maner thinge.
But yet for al his noble array
Wifeles he was unto that day,
As he that yet was yonge of age.
So fell there into his coráge
The lusty wo, the gladdé peine
Of lové which no man restreigne
Yet never might as now to-fore.
This lord thinketh all his world
forlore

But if the king woll done him grace.
He waiteth time he waiteth place
Him thought his herté woll to-breke,
Till he may to this maidé speke
And to her fader eke also
For mariáge. And it fell so,
That all was do, right as he thought,
His purpos to an ende he brought,
She wedded him as for her lorde;
Thus be they alle of one accorde.

"Whan al was do right as they
wolde,

The kinge unto his soné tolde
Of Tharsé thilké treterie,
And said, how in his compaignie
His daughter and him selven eke
Shall go vengeaúncé for to seke.
The shippés weré redy sone.
And whan they sigh it was to done

Withouté let of any went,¹
With saile up drawé forth they wente
Towardés Tharse upon the tide.
But he that wot what shall betide,
The highe God which wolde him
kepe,

Whan that this king was faste a slepe
By nightés time he hath him bede
To saile unto another stede;
To Ephesim he bad him drawe,
And as it was that timé lawe,
He shall do there his sacrifice.
And eke he bad in allé wise,
That in the temple amongés alle
His Fortune, as it is befallé,
Touchend his doughter and his wife
He shall beknowe upon his life.
The king of this avisió
Hath great ymaginació
What thinge it signifié may.
And nethéles whan it was day
He bad cast anker and abode.
And while that he on anker rode,
The wind, which was to-fore
straunge,

Upon the point began to chaunge
And torneth thider as it shulde.
Thoknewe he well, that God it wolde,
And bad the maister make him yare,
To-fore the wind for he wold fare
To Ephesim, and so he dede.
And whan he came into the stede,
Whereas he shuldé londe, he londeth
With all the haste he may, and
fondeth

To shapen him in suche a wise,
That he may by the morwe arise
And done after the maundément
Of him, which hath him thider sent.
And in the wisé that he thought,
Upon the morwe so he wrought.
His daughter and his sone he nome
And forth unto the temple he come

¹ *Let of any went*, hindrance of any turning
aside.

With a great route in compaigný
His yiftés for to sacrify.

The citezeins tho herden say
Of such a king that came to pray
Unto Diané the goddésse
And lefte all other besinesse,
They comen thider for to se
The king and the solempnité.

“With worthy knightés environéd
The king him self hath abandóned
Into the temple in good entente.
The dore is up and in he wente,
Whereas with great devoción
Of holy contemplación
Within his herte he made his shrifte.
And after that a riché yifte
He offreth with great reverence,
And there in open audiéce
Of hem that stoden all about
He tolde hem and declareth out
His hap such as him is befallé;
There was no thing foryete of alle.
His wife, as it was Goddés grace,
Which was professéd in the place
As she that was abbéssé there,
Unto his tale hath laid her ere,
She knew the vois and the viságe,
For puré joy as in a rage
She straught unto him all at ones
And fell a swoune upon the stones
Wherof the temple flore was paved.
She was anone with water laved,
Till she came to her self ayein.
And thanné she began to sain:
‘Ha, blessed be the highé sonde,
That I may se min husébonde,
Which whilom he and I were one.’
The king with that knewe her anone
And toke her in his arme and kist,
And all the town thus sone it wist.
Tho was there joié manyfold,
For every man this tale hath told
As for mirácle, and were glade.
But never man such joié made
As doth the king which hath his wife.

And whan men herde how that her
life

Was savéd and by whom it was,
They wondren all of suche a cas.
Through all the londe arose the
speche

Of maister Cerimon the leche
And of the curé which he dede.
The king him self tho hath him bedé
And eke this quené forth with him,
That he the town of Ephesim
Woll leve and go where as they be,
For never man of his degre
Hath do to hem so mochel good.
And he his profite understood
And graunteth with hem for to
wende.

And thus they maden there anende
And token leve and gone to ship
With all the holé felaship.

“This king, which now hath his
desire,

Saith he woll holde his cours to Tire.
They hadden wind at willé tho
With topsail-cole,¹ and forth they go.
And striken never till they come
To Tire wher as they haven nome,
And londen hem with mochel blisse.
There was maný a mouth to kisse,
Eche oné welcometh other home.
But whan the quene to londé come
And Thaise her doughter by herside,
The joié which was thilké tide
There may no mannés tungé telle.
They saiden all, ‘Here cometh the
welle

Of alle womanisshé grace.’
The king hath take his réal place,
The quene is into chambre go;
There was great feste arraiéd tho.
Whan timé was they gone to mete,
All oldé sorwés ben foryete,
And gladen hem with joiés newe.
The descoloured palé hewe

¹ See note, page 253.

Is now become a ruddy cheke,
There was no merthé for to seke,
But every man hath what he wolde,
The king as he well couthe and
sholde

Maketh to his people right good
chere.

And after sone, as thou shalt here,
A parlément he hath sommóned,
Where he his doughter hath coróned
Forth with the lorde of Mitelene,
That one is king, that other quene.
And thus the faders ordenaunce
This londe hath set in governaunce,
And saidé that he woldé wende
To Tharsé for to make an ende
Of that his doughter was betraied,
Wherof were allé men well paid,
And said, how it was for to done.

"The shippés weren redy sone.
A strong powér with him he toke,
Up to the sky he cast his loke
And sigh the wind was covenáble.
They hale up anker with the cable,
They sail on high, the stere on honde,
They sailen till they come a londe
At Tharsé nigh to the citee.
And whan they wisten it was he,
The town hath done him reverence.
He telleth hem the violence,
Which the tretoúr Strangulio
And Dionise him haddé do
Touchénde his doughter, as ye herde.
And whan they wisté how it ferde,
As he which pees and lové sought,
Unto the town this he besought
To done him right in jugément.
Anone they weré both assent
With strengthe of men, and comen
sone,

And as hem thought it was to done,
Attaint they weré by the lawe
And deméd for to honge and drawe
And brent and with the wind to-
blowe,

That all the world it mighté knowe.
And upon this condición
The dome in execución
Was put anone withouté faile.
And every man hath great mervelle,
Whiche herdé tellen of this chaunce,
And thonketh Goddés purveaunce,
Which doth mercy forth with justice.
Slain is the mordrer and mordrice
Through verry trowth of right-
wisesse,

And through mercý sauf is simplese
Of hiré whom mercý preserveth ;
Thus hath he wel that wel deserveth.

"Whan all this thing is done
and ended,

This king which lovéd was and
frended,

A letter hath, which came to him
By shippé fro Pentapolim,
In which the lond hath to him write
That he wolde understonde and
wite,

How in good minde and in good pees
Dede is the kinge Agestrates,
Wherof they all of one accorde
Him praiden, as her legé lorde,
That he the letter wol conceive
And come his regné to receive
Which God hath yove him and
Fortúne.

And thus besoughté the commúne
Forth with the greté lordés alle .
This king sigh how it was befallé,
Fro Tharse and in prosperité
He toke his leve of that citee
And goth him into ship ayein.
The wind was good, the se was plein,
Hem nedeth nought a riff to slake,¹
Till they Pentapolim have take.
The lond which herde of that tidíng
Was wonder glad of his comíng.
He resteth him a day or two
And toke his counseil to him tho

¹ To slacken a reef.

And set a time of parlément,
Where all the londe of one assent
Forth with his wife have him co-
roned,

Where allé good him was foisoned.¹

"Lo, what it is to be well
grounded.

For he hath first his lové founded
Honestélich as for to wedde,
Honestélich his love he spedde
And haddé children with his wife,
And as him list he lad his life.

And in ensauple his life was write,
That allé lovers mighten wite .
How atté last it shal be sene
Of lové what they wolden mene.

For se now, on that othér side,
Antiochus with all his pride
Which set his love unkindély,
His ende he haddé sodeinly

Set ayein kinde upon vengeaúnce,
And for his lust hath his penaúnce.

"Lothus, mysoné, might thoulere,
What is to love in good manere,
And what to love in other wise.
The mede ariseth of the servíce,
Fortúné though she be nought
stable,

Yet at somtime is favourable
To hem that ben of lové trewe.
But certés it is for to rewe
To se love ayein kindé falle,
For that maketh sore a man to falle,
As thou might of to-foré rede.
Forthý my sone, I woldé rede
To let all other love away,
But if it be through such a wey
As love and reson wold accorde."—

"My fader, howso that it stonde,
Your tale is herde and understonde,
As thing which worthy is to here,
Of great ensample and grete matere,
Wherof, my fader, God you quite.
But in this point my self aquite

¹ *Foisoned*, poured out profusely

I may right wel, that never yit
I was assoted in my wit,
But onely in that worthy place
Where allé lust and allé grace
Is set, if that Daunger ne were,
But that is all my mosté fere.
I not what ye Fortúne accompte,
But what thing Daunger may
amounte

I wot wel, for I have assaied.
For whan min hert is best arraied
And I have all my wit through sought
Of lové to beseche her ought,
For all that ever I skillé may
I am concludéd with a nay,
That o silláble hath over throwe
A thousand wordés on a rowe
Of suche as I best speké can,
Thus am I but a lewdé man.
But fader, for ye ben a clerke
Of love, and this matere is derke
And I can ever lenger the lasse
But yet I may nought let it passe,
Your holé conseil I beseche,
That ye me by some weí teche,
What is my best, as for an ende."—

"Mysone, unto the trouthe wende
Now woll I for the love of the
And lete all other trifles be.

"The moré that the nede is high,
The more it nedeth to be sligh
To him which hath the nede on
honde.

I have well herd and understonde,
My sone, all that thou hast me saied
Ande ke of that thou hast me praied.
Nowe at this timé that I shall
As for conclusión fináll
Counsil upon thy nedé set,
So thenke I finally to knet
Thy causé where it is to-broke,
And make an ende of that is spoke.
For I behighté the that yift
First whan (thou come under my
shrift,

That though I toward Venus were,
 Yet spake I suché wordés there,
 That for the presthode which I have,
 Min order and min estate to save,
 I saide, I wolde of min office
 To vertu moré than to vice
 Encline and teché the my lore.
 Forthý to speken overmore
 Of Lové which the may availe,
 Take Lové where it may nought faile.
 For as of this which thou art in,
 By that thou seest it is a sinne,
 And sinné may no prise deserve,
 Withouté prise and who shall serve
 I not what profit might availe.
 Thus folweth it, if thou travaile
 Where thou no profit hast ne prise
 Thou art toward thy self unwise,
 And sith thou mightest lust atteine,
 Of every lust the ende is peine
 And every peín is good to flee.
 So it is wonder thing to se
 Why such a thing shall be desired.
 The moré that a stock is fired
 The rather¹ into ashe it torneth.
 The fote which in the weié sporneth
 Full ofte his heved hath overthrowe.
 Thus Love is blinde and can nought
 knowe
 Where that he goth till he be falle.
 Forthý but if it so befallé
 With good counseil that he be lad,
 Him oughté for to ben adrad.
 For counseil passeth allé thing
 To him which thenketh to ben a
 king.
 And every man for his party
 A kingdom hath to justify,
 That is to sain, his owné dome.
 If he misreulé that kingdóme,
 He lest him self, and that is more,
 Than if he losté ship and ore
 And all the worldés good with all.
 For what man that in speciáll

¹ Rather, sooner.

Hath nought him self, he hath
 nought ellés,
 No more the perlés than the shelles,
 All is to him of o value—
 Though he had all his retenue
 The widé world right as he wolde—
 Whan he his hert hath nought
 witholde
 Toward him self, all is in vein.
 And thus, my sone, I woldé sain,
 As I said er, that thou arise
 Er that thou falle in such a wise
 That thou ne might thyself rekever;
 For Lové, which that blind was ever,
 Maketh all his servaunts blinde also.
 “My sone, and if thou have be so,
 Yet it is timé to withdrawe
 And set thin hert under that lawe
 The which of Reson is govérned
 And nought of Will. And to be
 lerned
 Ensamples thou hast many one
 Of now and eke of timé gone,
 That every lust is but a while.
 And who that woll him self beguile,
 He may the rather be deceived.
 My soné, now thou hast conceived
 Somwhat of that I woldé mene,
 Here afterward it shall be sene,
 If that thou leve upon my lore.
 For I can do to the no more,
 But teché the the righté way.
 Now chese, if thou wilt live or
 deie.”—
 “**My fader**, so as I have herde
 Your talé, but it were answärde,
 I weré mochel for to blame.
 My wo to you is but a game,
 That feleth nought of that I fele.
 The feling of a mannés hele
 May nought be likened to the herte;
 I wot that though I wolde asterolde
 And ye be fre from all the peine
 Of lové wherof I me pleine,
 It is right esy to commaunde.

The hert which fre goth on the launde
 Not¹ of an oxé what him eileth,
 It falleth oft a man merveileth
 Of that he seeth another fare.
 But if he knew himself the fare
 And felt it as it is in soth,
 He shuldé do right as he doth
 Or ellés wors in his degré.
 For wel I wote and so do ye,
 That love hath ever yet ben used,
 So mote I nedés ben excused.
 But fader, if ye woldé thus
 Unto Cupide and to Venus
 Be frendly toward my quarele,
 So that my herté were in hele
 Of lové which is in my breste,
 I wot wel than a better preste
 Was never made to my behove.
 But all the whilé that I hove
 In none certein betwene the two,
 And not where² I to well or wo
 Shall torné, that is all my drede,
 So that I not what is to rede.
 But for fináll conclusión
 I thenke a supplicación
 With pleiné wordés and expresse
 Write unto Venus the goddessse,
 The which I praié you to bere
 And bring ayein a good answeré.”

**Who was betwene my prest
 and me**

Debate and great perplexeté.
 My Reson understode him wele
 And knewe it was soth every dele
 That he hath said, but nought forthý
 My Will hath no thing set ther by.
 For touching of so wise a porte
 It is unto love no disporte.
 Yet mighté never man beholde
 Resón, where Lové was witholde,³
 They be nought of o governaunce.
 And thus we fellen in distaunce
 My prest and I, but I spake faire

¹ Not, knows not.

² Not where, know not whether.

³ Witholde, held with.

And through my wordés debonaire
 Than atté lasté we accorden,
 So that he saith, he woll accorden
 To speke and stond upon my side
 To Venus both and to Cupide,
 And bad me writé what I wolde.
 And said me truly that he sholde
 My letter bere unto the quene.
 And I sat down upon the grene
 Fulfilléd of Loves fantasy
 And with the terés of min eye
 In stede of inke I gan to write
 The wordés which I wol endite
 Unto Cupide and to Venus,
 And in my letter I saide thus :—

**The wofull peine of lovés
 maladie,**

Ayein the which may no phisique
 availe, [sotie,
 Min hert hath so bewhappéd with
 That whéré so that I reste or travaile
 I finde it ever redy to assaile
 Myreson, which that can him nought
 defende.
 Thus seche I help wherof I might
 amende.

First to Natúre if that I me com-
 pleine,
 There finde I how that every creäture
 Somtime a yere¹ hath love in his
 demaine,
 So that the litel wrenne in his mesure
 Have yet of kinde a love under his
 cure,
 And I but one desiré, which I misse,
 And thus but I hath every kinde his
 blisse.

The reson of my wit it overpasseth,
 Of that Natúre teché me the wey
 To love and yet no certein she
 compásseth

¹ At some time in each year.

How shal I spede; and thus between
the twey
I stonde and not¹ if I shall live or dey.
For though Resón ayein my will
debate,
I may nought flee that I ne love
algate.

Upon my self this ilké talé come,
How whilom Pan, which is the god
of kinde,
With Lové wrestled and was over-
come,
For ever I wrestle and ever I am
behinde,²
That I no strength in all min herté
finde
Wherof that I may stonden any
throwe,
Sofer my wit with love is overthrowe.

Whom nedeth help, he mot his helpé
crave
Or helpéles he shall his nedé spille.
Pleinly throughsought my wittés al
I have,
But none of hem can help after my
wille.
And al so well I mighté sité stille
As pray unto my lady of any helpe,
Thus wote I nought wherof my self
to helpe.

Unto the greté Jove and if I bid
Todo me grace of thilké sweté tonne
Which under key in his cellér amid
Lith couchéd, that Fortúne is over-
ronne;
But of the bitter cuppe I have be-
gonne, [game,
I not how ofte, and thus finde I no
For ever I axe and ever it is the same.

¹ Not, know not.

² For e'er I wrestl' and e'er I am behind. So
in last line of next stanza but one, "e'er" . . .
"e'er."

I se the world stond ever upon
eschaunge,
Now windés loudé, now the weder
softe,
I may seekethe greté moné chaunge,
And þing which now is low is eft
alofté;
The dredful werrés into pees ful ofte
They torne, and ever is Daunger in
o place,
Which woldé chaunge his Will to
do me grace.

But upon this the greté clerk Ovíde,
Of Lové whan he maketh rémem-
braunce,
He saith: Ther is the blindé god
Cupide,
The which hath love under his
governaunce
And in his hond with many a firy
lance
He woundeth ofté where he woll
nought hele,
And that somdele is cause of my
quarele.

Ovídées saith, that lové to performe
Stant in the hond of Venus the
goddésse,
But whan she taketh counseil with
Satorne
There is no grace, and in that time
I gesse
Began my love, of which min hevi-
nesse
Is now and ever shall, but if I spede,
So wot I nought my self what is to
rede.

Forthý to you, Cupide and Venus
both,
With all min hertés obeisaunce I
pray,
If ye were atté firsté timé wroth,

Whan I began to loven, I you say,
Now stint, and do thilké Fortúne
 away,
So that Daungér, which stant of
 retenue
With my lady, his placé may remue.

O thou Cupidé, god of lovés lawe,
That with thy dart brennénd hast
 set a fire
My herté, do that woundé be with-
 drawe,
Or yivé me salve, suche as I desire.
For service in thy court withouten
 hire
To me which ever yet have kept
 thin heste,
May never be to lovés lawe honeste.

O thou, gentilé Venus, lovés quene,
Withouté gilt thou dost on me thy
 wreche,
Thou wost my pein is ever alich grene
For love, and yet I may it nought
 arecche.¹
Thus wolde I for my lasté word
 besече
That thou my love aquite as I
 deserve,
Or ellés do me plainly for to sterve.

• **Whan** I this supplicación
With good deliberación,
In suche a wise as ye now wite,
Had after min ententé write
Unto Cupide and to Venús,
This presté which hight Geniús
It toke on hondé to presente.
On my message and forth he wente
To Venus for to wit her wille.
And I bode in the placé stille
And was there but a litel while
Noughtfull the mountance of a mile;
Whan I behelde and sodeinly

¹ *Areche*, reach to.

I sigh where Venus stood me by.
So as I might, under a tree
To groundé I felle upon my knee
And preid her for to do me grace.
She cast her chere upon my face
And as it were halving a game
She axeth me, what was my name.
'Madame,' I saidé, 'Iohan Gower.'
 'Now Iohan,' quod she, 'in my
 power

Thou must as of thy lové stonde.
For I thy bill have understonde
In which to Cupide and to me
Somdele thou hast compleigné the;
And somdele to Natúre also,
But that shall stonde among you two
For therof have I nought to done,
For Natúre is under the mone
Maistresse of every livés kinde,
But if so be that she may finde
Some holyman that woll withdrawe
His kindly lust, ayein her lawe.
But seldé whan it fallieth so,
For fewé men there ben of tho.
But of these other inowé be,
Whiche of her owné nicité
Ayein Natúre and her office
Deliten hem in sondry vice
Wherof that she full oft hath
 pleigned;

Andeke my Courtit hath disdeigned
And ever shall, for it receiveth
None such that kindé so desceiveth.
For all onlich of gentil love
My Court stant allé Courts above
And taketh nought into retenue
But thing which is to Kindé due.
For ellés it shall be refused,
Wherof I holdé the excused.
For it is many daiés gone,
That thou amongés hem were one
Which of my court shall be witholdé,
So that the more I am beholde
Of thy disesé to commúne
And to remué that Fortune

Which many daies hath the greved.
 But if my counseil may be leved,
 Thou shalt be eséd er thou go
 Of thilke unsely jolif wo
 Wherof thou saist thin hert is fired.
 But as of that thou hast desired
 After the sentence of thy bill,
 Thou must therof done at iny will
 And I therof me woll avise.
 For be thou hole, it shall suffice ;
 My medicine is nought to seke
 The which is holsome to the seke,
 Noughtall perchaunce as ye it wolde
 But so as ye by reson sholde,
 Accordaunt unto lovés kinde.
 For in the plite which I the finde,
 So as my Court it hath awarded,
 Thou shalt be dúely rewarded.
 And if thou woldest moré crave,
 It is no right that thou it have.'

Venus, which stant withoute
 lawe,

In none certeine, but as men drawe
 Of rageman upon the chaunce,
 She laith no peise in the balaunce,
 But as her liketh for to weie
 The trewé man full ofte aweie
 She put, which hath her gracé bede,
 And sette an untrue in his stede.

Lo, thus blindly the world she
 demeth

In Lovés cause, as to me semeth,
 I not what other men wold sain
 But I algate am so beseine,
 And stonde as one amonges alle
 Which am out of her gracé falle.
 It nedeth také no witnesse,
 For she, which said is the goddessse
 To whether parte of love it wende,
 Hath set me for a finall ende
 The point wherto that I shall holde.

For whan she hath me well beholde
 Halving of scorne she saidé thus :
 "Thou wost well that I am Venús,
 Which all only my lustés seche.

And well I wot though thou beseche
 My lové lustés ben there none
 Which I may take in thy persone,
 For lovés lust and lockés hore
 In chambre accorden nevermore.
 And though thou feigne a yong
 coráge,

It sheweth well by thy viságe,
 That oldé grisel is no fole.
 There ben full many yerés stole
 With the and other suché mo
 That outward feignen youthé so
 And ben within of pouer assay.
 'My herté wolde, and I ne may,'
 Is nought belovéd now a daies.
 Er thou make any such assaies
 To love, and faile upon thy fete,
 Bet is to maké *beau retrete*.'

"My sone, if that thou well be-
 thought,

This toucheth the, foryete it nought,
 The thing is tornéd into 'was,'
 The which was whilomé grene gras
 Is welkéd heie as timé, now.
 Forthy my counseil is, that thou
 Remembre well how thou art olde."

Whan Venus hath her talé tolde,
 And I bethought was all aboute,
 And wisté wel withouten doubte
 That there was no recoverire,
 And as a man the blase of fire
 With water quençheth, so ferde I .
 A coldé me caught sodeinly ;
 For sorwe that my herté made
 My dedly facé pale and fade
 Becam, and swoune I fel to grounde.
And as I lay the samé stounde
 Ne fully quick, ne fully dede,
 Me thought I sigh to-fore min hede
 Cupidé with his bowé bent
 And like unto a parlément
 Which were ordeinéd for the nones,
 With him cam all the world atones
 Of gentil folke, that whilom were
 Lovés, I sigh hem alle there

Forth with Cupide in sondry routes.
 Min eye and as I cast aboutes
 To know among hem who was who,
 I sigh where lusty youthé tho,
 As he which was a capitein
 To-fore all other upon the plein
 Stood with his routé well begon,
 Her hedes kempt, and therupon
 Garlondés, nought of o colour,
 Some of the lefe some of the floure,
 And some of greté perles were.
 The newé guise of Beawmé there
 With sondry thingés well devised
 I sigh, wherof they be queintised.
 It was all lust that they with ferde.
 There was no song that I ne herde
 Which unto lové was touching,
 Of Pan and all that was liking,
 As in piping of melodie
 Was herde in thilké compaignie,
 So loudé that on every side
 It thought as all the heven cride
 In suche accorde and suche a soun
 Of bombarde and of clarioúne
 With cornemúse and with shalméle,
 That it was half a mannés hele
 So glad a noisé for to here.

And as me thought in this manere
 All fresshe I sigh hem springe and
 daunce,

And do to love her entendaunce
 After the lust of youthés hest,
 There was inough of joy and fest.

- For ever among they laugh and pley
 And putten care out of the wey,
 That he with hem ne sat ne stode.
 And over this I understode,
 So as min ere it might arecche,
 The mosté matere of her speche
 It was of knighthode and of armes,
 And what it is to ligge in armes
 With lové whan it is achieved.

There was Tristram, which was
 beleved
 With Bele Isolde, and Lancelot

Stode with Gunnór, and Galahot
 With his lady, and as me thought,
 I sigh where Jason with him brought
 His lové, which Creüsa hight.
 And Hercules which mochel might
 Was theré bering his great mace,
 And most of all in thilké place
 He peineth him to maké chere
 With Eölen which was him dere.
 Theseus though he were untrewé
 To love, as allé women knewe,
 Yet was he theré nethéles
 With Fedra which to love he ches.
 Of Grece eke there was Thelamon,
 Which fro the kingé Lamedon
 At Troy his doughter reft away
 Eseönen as for his pray,
 Which také was whan Jason cam
 Fro Colchos and the citee nam
 In vengeance of the firsté hate
 That made hem after to debate
 Whan Priamus the newé town
 Hath made. And in avisioün
 Me thoughté that I sigh also
 Hector forth with his brethern two,
 Him self stood with Pantasilee,
 And next to him I mighté see,
 Where Paris stood with faire Heleine,
 Which was his joié souveraine.
 And Troilus stood with Creseide.
 But ever among although he pleide,
 By semblaunt he was hevy chered.
 For Diomedé, as him was lered,
 Claimeth to be his partenére.
 And thus full many a bachelere,
 A thousand mo than I can sain,
 With youth I sigh there well besein
 Forth with her lovés glad and blith.

And some I sigh, which ofte sith
 Compleignen hem in sondry wise,
 Among the which I sigh Narcise
 And Piramus, that sory were.
 The worthy Greke also was there.
 Achilles, which for lové deied.
 Agámenon eke as men saied,

And Menelay the King also
 I sigh with many an other mo
 Which hadden be fortunéd sore
 In lovés cause. And overmore
 Of women in the samé cas
 With hem I sigh where Dido was
 Forsaké which was with Enee.
 And Phillis eke I mighté see,
 Whom Demophon deceivéd hadde,
 And Adriagne her sorwe ladde,
 For Theseús her suster toke
 And her unkindély forsoké.
 I sigh there eke among the pres
 Compleigning upon Herculés
 His firsté lové Deianire,
 Which set him afterward a fire.
 Medea was there eke and pleigneth
 Upon Jasón for that he feigneth
 Withouté cause and toke a newe,
 She saidé, 'Fie on all untrewé!'
 I sigh theré Deídamie,
 Which haddé lost the compaignie
 Of Áchillés, whan Diomedé
 To Troy him fet upon the nede.
 Among these other upon the grene
 I sigh also the wofull quene
 Cleópatrás, which in a cave
 With serpents hath her self begrave
 All quick,¹ and so she was to-tore
 For sorwe of that she haddé lore
 Antónie, which her love hath be.
 And forth with her I sigh Tisbé,
 Whichon the sharpé swerdés pointé
 For lové deied in sory pointé.
 And as min ere it mighté knowe,
 She saidé, 'Wo worth alle slowe.'
 The pleint of Progne and Philomene
 There herde I what it woldé mene,
 How Tereús of his untrouthe
 Undid hem both, and that was
 route.
 And next to hem I sigh Canace,
 Which for Machair her faders grace
 Hath lost and deied in wofull plite.

¹ *Begrave all quick, buried alive.*

And as I sigh in my spirite,
 Me thought amongés other thus
 The doughter of king Priamus,
 Políxena, whom Pirrus slough,
 Was there and madé sorwe inough,
 As she which deide gilteles
 For love, and yet was lovéles.
 And for to také the desporte
 I sigh there some of other porte,
 And that was Circes and Calipse,
 That couthen do the moné clipse,
 Of men and chaungé the liknesse,
 Of artmagiqué sorceresse,
 They helde in hondé many one
 To lové, where they wolde or none.
 But above allé that there were
 Of women I sigh fouré there,
 Whose name I herdé most com-
 mended.
 By hem the court stode all amended.
 For where they comen in preséncé
 Men diden hem the reveréncé
 As though they hadden ben god-
 désses
 Of all this world or emperresses.
 And as me thought an ére I laid
 And herde, how that thesé other said:
 'Lo, thesé ben the fouré wives,
 Whose feith was provéd in her lives
 For in ensample of all good
 With mariágé so they stood
 That Famé, which no great thing
 hideth
 Yet in croníque of hem abideth.'
 Penelope that one was hote,
 Whom many a knight hath loved
 hote
 While that her lorde Ulixes laic
 Full many a yere and many a daie
 Upon the greté siege of Troy:
 But she which hath no worldés joy
 But only of her husebonde,
 While that her lord was out of londe,
 So well hath kept her womanhede,
 That all the world therof toke hede

And namelich of hem in Grece,
 That other woman was Lucrece,
 Wife to the Romain Collatine.
 And she constreigned of Tarquine
 To thing which was ayein her will,
 She woldé nought her selven still,
 But deide only for drede of shame
 In keping of her godé name,
 As she which was one of the beste.
 The thridde wife was hote Alceste,
 Which whan Admetus shuldé die
 Upon his greté maladie,
 She praied unto the goddés so,
 That she receiveth all the wo
 And deied her self to yive him life,—
 Se where this were a noble wife!
 The ferthé wife which I there sigh,
 I herde of hem that wére nigh,
 How she was cleped Alcíone,
 Which Céix hiré lord allone
 And to no mo her body kepte,
 And whan she sighe him dreint,
 she lepte

Into the wawés where he swam,
 And there a see foule she becam.
 And with her wingés him besprad
 For lové that she to him had.

Lo, thesé fouré weren tho,
 Which I sigh as me thoughté tho
 Among the greté compaignie,
 Which lové haddé for to gie.¹
 But Youthé, which in speciáll
 Of Lovés court was maréshall,
 So besy was upon his lay,
 That he none hedé where he lay
 Hath take. And than as I behelde,
 Me thought I sigh upon the felde,
 Where Eldé came a softé pas
 Toward Venús, there as she was,
 With him great compaignie he ladde,
 But nought so sele as Youthé hadde.
 The mosté part were of great age,
 And that was sene in her viságe,
 And nought forthý, soas they might,

¹ *Gie*, guide.

They made hem yongly to the sight.
 But yet herde I no pipés there
 To maké merth in mannés ere,
 But the muslique I mighté knowe
 For oldé men, which souned lowe
 With harpe and lute and with citoie
 The hové daunce and the carole,¹
 In suche a wise as love hath bedé,
 A softé pas they daunce and trede,
 And with the women otherwhile
 With sobre chere among theysmile,
 For laughter was there none on
 high.

And nethéles full well I sigh
 That they the moré queint it made
 For love in whom they weren glade.
 And there me thought I mighté see
 The king David with Bersabee,
 And Salomon was nought withoute
 Passing an hundred in a route
 Of wivés and of concubines;
 Jewesses eke and Sarazínes
 To him I sigh all entendaúnt.
 I not where he were suffisaúnt.
 But nethéles for all his wit
 He was attachéd with that writ
 Which Lové with his hond enseleth,
 From whom none crthly man ap-
 peleth.

And over this, as for no wonder,
 With his león, which he put under,
 With Dálilá Sampson I knewe,
 Whos love his strength all over-
 threwe.

I sigh there Aristotle also,
 Whom that the quene of Grece al so
 Hath bridled, that in thiké time
 She made him such a silogime,
 That he foryate all his logique,
 There was none arte of his practique,
 Through which it mighté ben ex-
 cluded,
 That he ne was fully concluded

¹ *Hové daunce*, court dance. *Carole*, an old round dance.

To love and did his obeisaunce.
And eke Virgile of áqueintaunce
I sigh, where he the maiden praid
Which was the doughter, as men
said,

Of themperour whilom of Rome.
Sortés and Plato with him come,
So did Ovídé the poete.

I thoughté than how love is swete
Which hath so wisé men reclaimed,
And was my self the lasse ashamed
Or for to lese or for to winne
In the mischefe that I was inne,
And thus I lay in hope of grace.

And whan they comen to the place,
Where Venus stood and I was falle,
These oldé men with o vois alle
To Venus praiden for my sake.

And she that mighté nought forsake
So great a clamour as was there,
Let pité come into her ere

And forth with all unto Cupide
She praieth that he upon his side
Me woldé through his gracé sende
Some comfort, that I might amende
Upon the cas which is befallé.

And thus for me they praiden alle
Of hem that weren old aboute,
And eke some of the yongé route,
Of gentilésse and puré trouth
I herde hem tel it was great routh,
That I withouten help so ferde.

And thus methought I lay and herde.

Cupidé, which maie hurt and hele
In Lovés cause, as for min hele
Upon the point which him was praid
Cam with Venús where I was laid
Swounénd upon the giené gras.

And as me thought anone there was

On every sidé so great pres,
That every life began to pres,
I wot nought wel how many score,
Suche as I spake of now to-fore,
Lovers, that comen to beholde,
But most of hem that weren olde.

They stoden there at thilké tide
To se what endé shall betide
Upon the cure of my sotie.

Tho might I heré great partie
Spekénd, and eche his own avis
Hath tolde, one that another this.
But among allé this I herde,
They weren wo that I so ferde,

And saiden that for no rióte
An oldé man shuld nought assote.

For as they tolden redely
There is in him no causé why,
But if he wold him self be nice,
So were he well the moré nice.

And thus desputen some of tho,
And somé saiden no thíng so,
But that the wildé lovés rage
In mannés life forbereth none age,

While there is oilé for to fire
The lampe is lightly set a fire
And is full hard er it be queint,

But only if he be some scint,
Which God preserveth of his grace.

And thus methought in sondry place,
Of hem that walken up and down
There was divers opinioún.

And for a whilé so it laste,
Till that Cupidé to the laste,
Forth with his moder full avised
Hath détermínéd and devised,

Unto what point he woll descend.
And all this time I was liggénd
Upon the ground to-fore his eyen.

And they that my disesé sighen
Supposen nought I shuldé live.
But he which woldé thanné yive

His gracé, so as it maie be,
This blindé god which may nought se
Hath gropéd till that he me fonde.

And as he putté forth his honde
Upon my body, where I lay,
Me thought a firy lancegay

Which whilom through my hert he
cast

He pulleth out, and al so fast

As this was do, Cupidé nam
His wey; I not where he becam;
And so did all the remenaunt
Which unto him was entendaunt
Of hem that in avisiôn
I had a revelaciôn,
So as I toldé now to-fore.
But Venus wenté nough ther-
fore.

Ne Genius, which thilké time
Abiden bothé fasté by me.
And she, which may the hertés linde
In lovés cause and eke unbinde,
Er I out of my traunce arose,
Venús, which helde a buisté close
And woldé nough I sholdé deie,
Toke out, more colde then ony keie
An oignément, and in such point
She hath my wounded hert anoint,
My temples and my reins also.
And forth with all she toke me tho
A wonder mirroure for to holde,
In which she bad me to beholde
And také hede of that I sigh;
Wherin anon min hertés eye
I cast and sigh my colour fadé,
Min eien dim and all unglade,
My chekés thinne, and all my face
With elde I mighté se deface,
So riveled and so wo besein
That there was nothing full ne plein.
I sigh also min hairés hore,
My will was tho to se no more,
On which for there was no plesaunce.
And than into my rémembraunce
I drough min oldé daiés passed,
And as resón it hath compassed,
I made a likenesse of my selve
Unto the sondry monthés twelve,
Wherof the yere in his estate
Is made, and stant upon debate,
That lich til other none accordeth.
For who the timés wel recordeth,
And than at Marche if he beginne,
Whan that the lusty yere comth inne

Till Augst bepasséd and Septembre,
The mighty youth hemay remembre,
In which the yere hath his deduit¹
Of grass, of lefe, of floure, of fruit,
Of corne, and of the winy grape.
And afterward the time is shape
To frost, to snow, to wind, to rain,
Till eft that March be come ayein.
The Winter woll no Somer knowe,
The grené lefe is overthrowe,
The clothéd erth is thanné bare,
Despuilé is the somer fare,
That erst was hete is thanné chele.
And thus thenkéndé thoughtés fele
I was out of my swoune affraid,
Wherof I sigh my wittés straid
And gan to clepe hem home ayein.
And whan Neson it herde sain
That lovés ragé was away,
He cam to me the righté wey
And hath remeved the sotie
Of thilke unwisé fantasie
Wherof that I was wont to plein,
So that of thilké fryr peín
I was made sobre and hole inough.
Venus beheld me than and lough
And axeth, as it were in game,
“What lové was?” And I for shame
Ne wisté what I shulde answee.
And nethéles I gan to swere
That “By my trouth I knewe him
nough,”

So fer it was out of my thought,
Right as it haddé never be.

“My godé soné,” tho quod she,
“Now at this time I leve it wele,
So goth the fortune of my whele.
Forthý my counseil is, thou leve.”—

“Madame,” I saidé, “by your
leve,

Ye weten well, and so wote I,
That I am unbehovély
Your Court fro this day for to serve.
And for I may no thank deserve,

¹ *Deduit*, delight.

And also for I am refused,
 I praié you to ben excused.
 And nethéles as for to laste,
 While that my wittés with me laste,
 Touchendé my confessión,
 I axe an absolución
 Of Genius, er that I go."

The prest anone was redy tho,
 And saidé: "Sone, as of thy shrifte,
 Thou hast full pardon and foryifte.
 Foryete it thou, and so will I."

"Min holy fader, graunt mercý,"
 Quod I to him, and to the quene
 I fell on knees upon the grene,
 And toke my levé for to wende.
 But she, that woldé make an ende,
 As therto, which I was most able,
 A paire of bedés blacke as sable
 She toke and heng my necke about.
 Upon the gaudés all without
 Was write of gold *pur reposer*.

"Lo," thus she said, "Iohan Gower,
 Now thou art atté lasté caste. †
 Thus have I for thin esc caste
 That thou no more of lové seche.
 But my will is, that thou beseche
 And pray hereafter for the pees,
 And that thou make a plein relees
 To love which taketh litel hede
 Of oldé men upon the nede,
 Whan that the lustes ben away,
 Forthy to the nis but o wey,
 In which let Reson be thy guide.
 For he may sone him self misguide,
 That seeth nought the perill to-fore.

"My soné, be well ware therfore
 And kepe the sentence of my lore
 Tarie thou in my court no more,
 But go there vertue moral dwelleth,
 Wherebenthy bokés, as men telleth,
 Whiche of long timé thou hast write.
 For this I do the well to wite,
 If thou thin helé wolt purcháce
 Thou might nought maké sute and
 chace

Where that the game is nought
 provable,

It were a thing unresonable,
 A man to be so overseie.
 Forthý take hede of that I saie.
 For in the lawe of my commune
 We be nought shapé to commune,
 Thy self and I, never after this.
 Now have I said all that there is
 Of love, as for thy final ende.
 Adieu, for I mot fro the wende."¹

¹ MS. Harl. 3490:

And grete well Chaucer, whan ye mete,
 As my disciple and my poete.
 For in the floures of his youth,
 In sondry wise, as he well couth,
 Of dittees and of songes glade,
 The which he for my sake made,
 The lond fulfilled is over all,
 Wherof to him in speciall
 Above all other I am most holde.
 Forthy now in his daies olde
 Thou shalt him telle this message,
 That he upon his later age
 To sette an end of all his werke,
 As he, which is min owne clerke,
 Do make his testament of love,
 As thou hast do thy shrifte above,
 So that my court it may recorde.
 Madame, I can me well accorde,
 Quod I, to telle as ye me bidde.
 And with that worde it so betidde
 Out of my sight all sodeinly,
 Enclosed in a sterry sky,
 Up to the heven Venus straught.
 And I my righte waie sought
 Home fro the wode and forth I wente,
 Where as with al min hole entente
 Thus with ny bedes upon honde
 For hem that true love fonde
 I thanke bidde while I live,
 Upon the point which I am shrive.
 He, which withinne daies seven
 The large world forth with the heven
 Of his eternal providence
 Hath made and thilke intelligence
 In mannes soule resonable,
 Wherof the man of feture
 Of alle erthly creature
 After the soule is immortal,

And with that word all sodeinly
 Encloséd in a sterréd sky
 Venús, which is the quene of love,
 Was take into her place above,
 More wist I nought where she
 becam.
 And thus my leve of her I nam.
 And forth with al that samé tide

To thilke lord in speciall
 As he, which is of alle thinges
 The creator and of the kinges
 Hath the fortune upon honde
 His grace and mercy for to fonde,
 Upon my bare knees I pray,
 That he my worthy king convey
 Richard by name the secounde,
 In whom hath ever yet be founde
 Justice medled with pite,
 Largesse forth with charite,
 In his persone it may be shewed,
 What is a king to be well thewed
 Touching of pite naniely,
 For he yet never unpetously
 Ayein the leges of his londe
 For no defaute which he fonde
 Through cruelte vengeance sought.
 As though the worldes chaunce in
 brought

Of infortune great debate,
 Yet was he nought infortunate,
 For he, which the fortune ladde,
 The highe god him overspradde
 Of his justice and kept him so,
 That his estate stood evermo
 Sauf as it oughte wel to be
 Lich to the sonne in his degre,
 Which with the cloudes up alofte
 Is derked and beshadewed ofte,
 But how so that it trouble in thaire
 The sonne is ever bright and faire
 Within him self and nought unpeired,
 All though the weder be despeired.
 The heved planete is nought to wite.
 My worthy prince, of whom I write,
 Thus stant he with him selve clere
 And doth what lith in his powere,
 Nought only here at home to seke
 Love and accorde, but outward eke,
 As he, that save his people wolde.
 So ben we alle well beholde

Her Prest, which woldé nought
 abide,
 Or be me lefe or be me loth,
 Out of my sighté forth he goth.
 And I was left withouten helpe,
 So wist I nought wherof to yelpe,
 But only that I haddé lore
 My time and was sorie therfore.

To do service and obeisaunce
 To him, which of his high suffraunce
 Hath many a great debate appesed
 To make his lege men ben esed,
 Wherefore that his cronique shall
 For ever be memoriall
 To the loenge of that he doth.
 For this wote every man in soth,
 What king that so desireth pees,
 He taketh the way which Criste ches,
 And who that Christes weies sueth,
 It proveth well that he escheueth
 The vices and is vertuous,
 Wherof he mot be gracious
 Toward his god and acceptable.
 And so to make his regne stable
 With all the will that I may yive
 I pray and shall while that I live,
 As I which in subjection
 Stonde under the protection
 And may my selven nought bewelde,
 What for sikenesse and what for elde,
 Which I receive of goddes grace,
 But though me lacke to purchase
 My kinges thank as by deserte,
 Yet the simplesse of my pouerte
 Unto the love of my legeaunce
 Desireth for to do plesaunce.
 And for this cause in min entent
 This pouer boke here I present
 Unto his highe worthinesse
 Write of my simple besinesse,
 So as sikenesse it suffre wolde,
 And in such wise as I first tolde,
 Whan I this boke began to make,
 In some partie it may be take
 And for to laugh and for to play,
 And for to loke in other wey
 It may be wisdom to the wise,
 So that somedeles for good apprise,
 And eke somedeles for lust and game
 I have it made for thilke same.

. And thus bewhaped in my
thought,
Whan all was tornéd into nought,
I stood amaséd for a while,
And in my self I gan to smile,
Thenkend upon the bedés blacke,
And how they weren me betake
For that I shuldé bid and praie,
And whan I sigh none other waie,
But only that I was refused,
Unto the life whiche I had uséd
I thoughté never torne ayein.
And in this wisé soth to sain
Homward a softé pas I went,
Where that with all min hole entent,
Upon the point that I am shrive,
I thenke biddé while I live.

He, which withinné daiés seven
This largé worlde forth with the
heven,
Of his eternal providence
Hath made, and thilke intelligence
In mannés soulé resonable
Hath shapé to be perdurable,
Wherof the man of his fetüre
Above all erthly créature
After the soule is immortal,
To thilké lorde in speciáll,
As he which is of allé thinges
The Créator and of the kinges
Hath the fortunés upon honde,
His grace and mercy for to fonde,
Upon my baré knees I praie,
That he this londe in siker waie
Woll set upon good governaunce.
For if men take in remembraunce,
What is to live in unité,
There is no state in his degré,
That ne ought to desiré pes,
Withoute which it is no les
To seche and loke into the past,
There may no worldés joie last.
First for to loké the clergie,

Hem oughté well to justifie
Thing which belongeth to their cure,
As for to praie and to procure
Our pees toward the heven above,
And eke to setté rest and love
Among us on this erthé here ;
For if they wrought in this manere
After the reule of charité
I hopé that men sholden se
This lond amende.

And over this
To seche and loke how that it is
Touchénd of the chivalérie,
Which for to loke in some partie
Is worthie for to be commended
And in some part to be amended,
That of her largé retenue
The lond is full of maintenue,
Which causeth that the comun right
In fewé contrés stont upright.
Extorción, kontek, ravine
Witholdé ben of that covine.
All day men heré great complaint
Of the disese, of the constreint,
Wherof the people is sore oppressed,
God graunt it moté be redressed,
For of knighthodé thorder wolde,
That they defende and kepé sholde
The comun right and the fraunchise
Of Holy Chirche in allé wise,
So that no wicked man it dere,
Andtherofservethshieldeandspere.
But for it goth now other waie,
Our gracé goth the more awaie.

And for to loken overmore,
Wherof the people pleignen sore
Toward the lawes of our londe,
Men sain that trouth hath broke
his bonde

And with brocagé is gone away,
So that no man can se the wey,
Where for to findé rightwisnesse.

And if men sech in sikernesse
Upon the lucre of marchandie,
Compassément and trecherie

Of singulár profit to winne,
Men sain is cause of mochel sinne,
And namely of división,
Which many a noble worthy town
Fro welth and fro prosperité
Hath brought to great adversité ;
So were it good to ben all one.
For mochel gracé therupon
Unto the citees shuldé fall,
Which might availé to us all,
If these estates amended were,
So that the Vertues stoden there,
And that the Vices were away,
Me thenketh I dorste thanné say,
This londes gracé shulde arise.

But yet to loke in other wise,

There is a state, as ye shall here,
Above all other on erthé here,
Which hath the londe in his
balaunce ;

To him belongeth the legeaunce
Of clerke, of knight, of man of lawe,
Under his honde all is forthdrawe
The marchaunt and the laborer,
So stant it all in his powér
Or for to spille, or for to save.

But though that he such power have,
And that his mightés ben so large,
He hath hem nought withouten
charge

To which that **every king** is swore.
So were it good, that he therfore
Fist unto rightwisnesse entende,
Wherof that he him self amende
Toward his God, and levé vice,
Which is the chefe of his office.
And after all the remenaunt
He shall upon his covenant
Góverne and lede in such a wise,
So that there be no tirannise
Wherof that he his people greve.
Or elles may he nought acheve
That longeth to his Regalie.

For if a king will justifie
His londe and hem that ben withinne,

First at him self he mot beginne
To kepe and reule his own estate,
That in him self be no debate
Toward his God. For otherwise
Ther may none erthly King suffice
Of his kingdóm the folk to lede,
But he the King of Heven drede.
For what King sette him upon pride
And taketh his lust on every side
And will nought go the righté weie,
Though God his gracé cast aweie,
No wonder is, for atté last
He shall well wite it may nought last,
The pompé whiche he secheth here.
But what King that with humble
chere

After the Lawe of God eschcueth
The Vices, and the Vertues sueth,
His gracé shall be suffisaunt
To governe all the remenaunt,
Which longeth unto his dueté ;
So that in his prosperité
The people shall nought be op-
pressed,
Wherof his namé shall be blessed
For ever and be memoriall.

And now to speke as in finall
Touchéndé that I undertoke
In English for to make a boke
Which stant betwene ernést and
game,

I have it made as thilké same,
Which axé for to be excused,
And that my boke benought refused
Of leréd men whan they it se
For lack of curiosité ;
For thilké scole of eloquence
Belongeth nought to my sciéce,
Upon the forme of rhetorique
My wordes for to peint and pike,
As Tullius somtimé wrote.
But this I knowe and this I wote,
That I have do my trewé peine
With rudé wordés and with pleine

In all that ever I couthe and might,
This boke to write as I behight,
So as siknése it suffer wolde.
And also for my daiés olde
That I am feble and impotent,
I wot nought how the worlde is
went,¹

So pray I to my lordés alle,
Now in min age, how so befallé,
That I mot stonden in her grace.
For though me lacké to purchace
Her worthy thank, as by deserte,
Yet the simplésse of my pouerte
Desireth for to do plesaunce
To hem under whose governaunce
I hopé siker to abide.
But now, upon my lasté tide,
That I this boke have made and
write,

My Musé doth me for to wite
And saith, it shall be for my beste,
Fro this day forth to také reste,
That I no more of lové make,²
Which many a herte hath overtake
And overtornéd as the blinde
Fro reson into lawe of kinde,

¹ *Went*, turned.

² *Make*, write poetry.

Where as the wisdom goth awaie
And can nought se the righté weie
How to gouverne his own estate,
But every day stant in debate
Within him self and can nought leve.

And thus forth by my final leve

I také now for evermore
Withouté making¹ any more
Of love and of his dedly hele,
Which no phisician can hele.
For his natúre is so divers,
That it hath ever some travers
Or of to moch or of to lite,
That pleinely may no man delite,
But if him faile or that or this,
But thilké Lové, which that is
Within a mannés herte affirmed
And stant of Charité confirmed,
Such Love is goodly for to have,
Such Lové may the body save,
Such Lové may the soule amende,
The Highe God such Love us sende
Forth with the remedaunt of grace,
So that above in thilké place,
Where resteth Love and alle Pees,
Our joie may ben endclés.

¹ *Making*, writing poems.

*Explicit iste liber, qui transeat obsecro liber,
Ut sine livore vigeat lectoris in ore.
Qui sedet in scammis celi det, ut ista Johannis
Perpetuis annis stet pagina grata Britannis.*

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